TENNYSON'S THE PRINCESS

BAKER

Willis Boughton.

TWENTIETH CENTURY TEXT-BOOKS

EDITED BY

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THE PRINCESS

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EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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TO

HENRY SHRIVER

TO WHOSE INFLUENCE AS TEACHER AND MAN

THE EDITOR OWES MORE THAN HE CAN EXPRESS

THIS VOLUME

IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

PREFACE

THERE are now so many school editions of *The Princess* that it may seem a presumption to add to the list. New matter, either of information or opinion, can no longer be expected. The basis of judgment of the book must be shifted from the points of view of scholarship and criticism to that of expediency in teaching. The editor has gleaned wherever he could that which it seemed to him the average teacher with the average class would find most helpful; and his indebtedness to the excellent work of his predecessors is so obvious that it needs no more than this general acknowledgment. Whatever is new in this edition will be found mainly in the personal point of view which has determined the selection of material. The text is that of the Globe edition, Macmillan, 1901.

The editor's special thanks are due to his colleague, Miss Ellen Yale Stevens, who has given many helpful suggestions and assisted in reading the proofs.

F. T. B.

INTRODUCTION

No poet of the century just completed has had a reputation so long continued or so preeminent as Tennyson. For the fifty years preceding his death in 1892, he was, with the exception of Wordsworth, unquestionably England's greatest living poet. Because of his expression of the thought and feeling of his time, and his power of seeing and revealing beauty, his work of highest merit is likely to be enrolled among the best of all in the six centuries of English literature.

He was born at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, England, August 6, 1809. There were twelve children in the family, of whom Alfred was the fourth. Most of them "were more or less true poets." Two of them, Charles and Frederick, wrote verse which, though far below that of their famous brother, had considerable merit. Tennyson's childhood gave promise not only of his artistic inclinations, but of his future poetic powers. He was a leader in the imaginative games, story-tellings, and dramatic impersonations of the children. He remembered an attempt at the writing of verse when in his eighth year. Later efforts, while he was still in early boyhood, showed imagination and a correct ear. As a boy he was a lover of books, and read eagerly and widely.

His school life began at Louth, under a master of the severe and flogging type once so common. As a bright and diligent pupil, he could hardly have experi-

enced the full rigors of the system. Yet late in his life he said: "How I did hate that school! The only good I ever got from it was the memory of the words 'Sonus desilientis aquæ,' and of an old wall covered with wild weeds opposite the school windows."[1]

When eleven years of age he left the school and came back to work under his father's direction. His father was a clergyman, sound in scholarship and understanding. To his learning and judgment, and to his excellent library, his son owed the fine training in the classics and sciences, and the wide reading that he had before entering the university. To him, too, he doubtless owed his capacious interest in all things intellectual, as he owed to his mother his fineness of feeling.

His first published poems appeared in 1827, in a volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers*, when our poet was less than eighteen and his brother Charles less than seventeen years of age. Four of the poems had been written by an older brother, Frederick. As poetry, the volume contained some merit; as the promise of better things to come, it is now an interesting performance.

In the following year Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge University. Here he became one of a group of enthusiastic and intellectual young men, many of them afterward famous. A pleasant personal account of him at this time is given by one of his friends: "Six feet high, broad chested, strong limbed; his face Shakespearian, with deep eyelids; his forehead ample, crowned with dark, wavy hair; his head finely poised; his hand the admiration of sculptors, long fingers with square tips, soft as a child's, but of great size and strength. What struck one most about him was the union of strength with refinement."[1]

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[1] Quoted in the *Memoir of Tennyson*, by his Son. Macmillan, 1897.

His studious habits, his wide reading, and his intellectual interests, particularly in poetry and the philosophical speculations of the age, were marked at this time, as in all his later life. His university career laid the foundations of the rich culture and intimate knowledge of literature found in his later poetry. In 1829 he won the university prize by his blank verse poem, *Timbuctoo.*

In 1830 he published a small volume called *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*; in 1832, a second volume, containing *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Miller's Daughter*, *The Palace of Art*, *The Lotus Eaters*, and other poems, which not only sounded a new note in English poetry, but are still among his best-known works. The volumes were very differently received. The reviewers, trained in a different school of poetry, saw in them more faults and weaknesses than beauties. The younger men, particularly at the university, hailed him as a new poet, and formed a sort of Tennyson "cult."

Tennyson's taste was too good not to see, and his love of art too sincere not to admit, the faults of his work. For the next ten years he kept silent, reading and working like Milton in his six years at Horton, to equip himself for his great calling. In 1842 appeared another volume, containing the best in the beauty of picture and the sweetness or rhythm of the earlier work, and enriched by wider learning, better critical insight, deeper and more serious thought.

The change in the nature of his work is to be accounted for not merely by his conscientious devotion to his studies and his art, but also by a bereavement which made upon him a profound and lasting impression. In September, 1833, he had lost his dearest friend, Arthur Hallam, the accepted lover of his sister, the man whose memory is perpetuated in *In Memoriam.* Tennyson's

nature was sensitive, affectionate, and reflective. In his great elegy we see plainly that the death of his friend had directed and influenced his meditations over the problems and mysteries of life. Although the *In Memoriam* was not published until 1850, parts of it were in existence as early as 1841, and the traces of this influence are evident in the 1842 volume. In the *Morte d'Arthur*, *Dora*, *Ulysses*, and *Locksley Hall* are found the picturesqueness, the love of beauty, and the music of the earlier volumes, with more of the

> Sober coloring of an eye
> That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.

Tennyson's popularity did not come suddenly. The little circle of admirers had steadily widened, until, after this volume, he occupied an established place among the younger poets. But the income from his poetry did not yet yield him a livelihood. His betrothal to Miss Emily Sellwood in 1837 was canceled after two or three years, and not renewed until nearly ten years later, when he had won for himself a permanent place in literature. They were married in 1850, and in the same year Tennyson was made Poet Laureate, to succeed Wordsworth.

The Princess was issued in 1847, and successive editions appeared in 1848, 1850, 1851, and 1853, each of them having received changes or additions at the hand of this careful workman.

The rest of his long and busy life was that of student and poet. Of his longer works the best known, besides those already mentioned, are *Maud*, *Enoch Arden*, and *The Idylls of the King*.

His home was at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, and, later, at Aldworth, in Sussex. His fame had grown, and he had sought in these places retirement and leisure

for his work. His later life was filled with the rewards of emolument and honor. Among his friends were the most distinguished men of England. In 1865 he had refused a baronetcy. 'In 1884 he was made a peer. He died in 1892.

No attempt can be made here to give an estimate of his powers and achievements. His poetry is great in amount, and of more even excellence than is usual in great poets. His lyrics are known by all who read English literature, and loved for the beauty of their pictures and the sweetness of their melody. Throughout his poems we find an accurate and sympathetic expression of the thought and feeling of his time.

His chief excellence, perhaps, is in the quality belonging to his lyrics. Minute and unflagging devotion to beauty as such, beauty of phrase, and beauty of picture, controlled everywhere by almost feminine purity of word and thought, was the crowning characteristic of both the man and his art.

THE PRINCESS

The Princess is the most elaborate and highly finished of all Tennyson's longer works.

The Plot.—The story, stripped of ornament and reflection, is simple. A Prince of the north had been betrothed to a Princess of the south in their childhood. When the fulfilment of the betrothal is claimed there comes an answer "vague as wind." The Prince and two friends, Cyril and Florian, proceed to the land of the Princess, where they learn that she has founded a woman's college, and denied to men all access to the grounds. They gain admission by assuming the garb of women, are presented to the Princess as head of the College, and enroll themselves as the pupils of Lady Psyche, Florian's widowed sister. They hear her give a lecture

covering a remarkable range of subjects, and filled with the spirit of the college—the desire to emancipate women from bondage to men by giving them the higher education. At the close of the lecture Psyche recognizes her brother Florian, upbraids him and his companions for their treacherous entrance, and threatens them with death—the penalty for any man who intrudes upon the consecrated precincts of the College. Mollified by their eloquent pleadings, she promises secrecy in exchange for their promise to steal away.

Meanwhile, Melissa, the lovely daughter of Lady Blanche, colleague and rival of Lady Psyche, has entered and overheard the end of the conversation. But she has no disposition to betray and "give three gallant gentlemen to death." Her innocence is, however, too transparent a receptacle for the secret. Her blushes betray it to the hawk-eyed, man-hating Lady Blanche, and Melissa comes next morning in grief and distress to warn the men to flee. Cyril seeks the Lady Blanche, and by hard work cajoles her into a temporary truce.

In the afternoon a party, among which are the Princess and the men, go on a geological expedition. In the twilight they pitch their tent, to sup and rest. Songs are sung by the party, and finally Cyril, whose masquerade and sense of humor have been much at war, sings a song too free for ladies' ears. In wrath the Prince strikes him, and the secret is out. In clamorous confusion the women mount their horses and flee. The Princess, blind with rage, misses her way and falls into the river, whence the Prince, of course, rescues her.

The Princess, taken home, calls the girls to trial to find who had connived at the outrage to the college. Melissa's guilty knowledge is easily revealed; Psyche has fled. Cyril makes his escape, but Florian and the

Prince are caught by proctors, and brought up for judgment. The Princess hears the latter's plea of love for her with bitter mockery. The men receive a scathing rebuke in their bedraggled woman's garb, and are thrust ignominiously out of the gates by the brawny arms of the ploughwomen. Lady Blanche, too, is dismissed in deep disgrace.

Meanwhile, the warlike old King, the father of the Prince, had taken his army and followed his son. Seizing the Princess's father, King Gama, as hostage for the safety of his son, he had encamped outside the walls of the college grounds. Into the fire-lit camp the two young men stumble, and the titter at their appearance grows into a roar of Homeric laughter. Here they find Cyril. Psyche, too, is there, overcome with humiliation and prostrate with grief for her child, whom she had left behind in the panic of her flight.

King Gama is now released and escorted back to his own army. The Prince's father wishes to enforce his claim by war. The Prince urgently opposes violence, because it is cruel and senseless, and because it would make him "loom three times a monster" to the Princess. It is at length decided to tilt in a tournament for her hand, with fifty men on each side. The champions of the Princess are led by her three giant brothers, while she and her women watch the combat from the walls. Her champions are victorious, and the Prince falls upon the field, apparently dead.

The Princess and her women descend to the plain, she carrying the Lady Psyche's babe in her arms. She yields to the urgent pleadings of Psyche and the rest, and restores the babe to its mother. Then she orders that the wounded men be taken in, sends most of the girls home, and makes the college a hospital. She herself tends the Prince. Love soon finds its way into the

forbidden precincts. Florian wins Melissa; Cyril, Psyche; other men find brides among their gentle nurses; and, finally, the Prince, recovering almost from death, finds that the Princess, softened first by love of Psyche's child, then by care and pity for his weakness, and finally by realizing, through long hours of meditation, the wildness and folly of excluding the natural feelings of the heart from her plans, has found her own womanly nature and awaked to love.

The setting of the story.—A bare outline of the plot conveys a very inadequate idea of the poem. Much of its effect is due to its setting. A party of college students on their summer vacation are guests at an English nobleman's country-seat. While the nobleman's tenants are given a holiday in his grounds, and entertained with toys illustrating modern science, the college party and their hosts wander to the abbey ruins near-by. The poet of the party has found an old chronicle celebrating the warlike deeds of a legendary ancestress of the house, and from this the talk proceeds through various topics to that of the true position of women in modern life. It is then agreed to tell a tale by turns, each taking up the story where it is left by his predecessor. The women of the party sing the lyrical interludes. At the end the poet undertakes to reproduce the story.

Its Medley Form

Ancient and modern elements.—The poem is a true medley. Ancient and modern elements are jumbled together like the curios in Sir Walter's house. We have talk of woman's rights and, to settle them, a tournament in medieval form; a woman's college and a proxy betrothal; a king of medieval type; and a hero and heroine entirely modern in their feelings and points of view.

The comic and the serious touch elbows everywhere. Lady Psyche's babe sleeps in the lecture-room while she surveys the ages and the sciences in one lecture; the Princess is ridiculous, and yet great-souled; her pets are two leopards, "great cats"; she tumbles ignominiously into the river and is saved by the hero whom she scorns; she sits in haughty judgment while her hair is drying from her unsought bath. The hero and his friends incur danger of death; and are pushed out of the gate by the brawny arms of women; they come to their army in ridiculously disheveled woman's garb. The weak and oily King Gama is defied by his womankind, and the blustering threats of the Prince's father are set at naught. The high ideals of the Princess are childish in their ignorance of human nature, and they bring both sorrow and laughter before they give place to a wiser view of life. Within the college itself the older women are found murmuring that "their May of life was passing; they wished to marry; they could rule a house; men hated learned women." The two supporters of the Princess have become jealous of each other, and the college is split into factions. The tone of the poet's treatment passes rapidly between seriousness and gentle banter; is now sober, now mock-heroic.

Farce and beauty.—The farcical and the beautiful tread upon each other's heels. While the Prince is in hiding in the grounds two women proctors leap upon him, and he runs, tearing his gown and tripping over a root, and all the while surrounded by the heavy fragrance of roses and the swelling notes of the nightingale. Everywhere is beauty: in the statues and pictures —symbolizing the insignificance of man and the greatness of woman; picturesque groups of beautiful girls gaily clad; music of tender sentiment or of solemn wor-

ship. And through it all is the incongruous situation of the men awkwardly wearing the garb of women, while the women play at being men.

Types of poetry.—In the various types of poetry, too, the medley element appears. The poem is made up of epic, farce, lyric, and pastoral.

Advantages of the medley.—Tennyson's purpose in choosing this medley form we partly know. He said once that if women should assume the parts of men we should have just such a mixture of tragedy and comedy as the poem shows. Perhaps he felt, too, that he could treat the theme justly in no other way. If treated seriously, it could easily degenerate into bathos and provoke only ridicule; if treated as wholly farcical, it would be untrue to the really serious elements of the problem. Though written fifty years ago, the poem may be said still to express the view of sane and wise minds that have both sympathy and sense of humor. What the medley form detracts in clearness, it adds in variety. When once the theme and story are clearly grasped, one finds at every turn fresh pleasure in the quick transitions and the richness of the poet's resources.

Ornate style.—And yet it must be confessed that the art of the poem is not of the highest type; not of the clear, strong, and unified kind that may be found, for example, in the poet's own *Ulysses* and *Morte d'Arthur*. It is rather the single bits, the exquisite descriptions and lyrics, that give the highest pleasure. The poem as a whole seems overloaded with ornament. One grows weary of the symbolic decorations of the grounds, and one would sometimes rather hear the plain term than the figurative. It is not always worth the mental effort to interpret the indirect expression.

The Characters

The characters are interesting in themselves and well drawn for the purposes of the theme. Of course they are not very real; neither are the incidents of the story. The medley quality of the poem precludes the sense of reality. But the characters are well-formed *types.*

The Princess is the strenuous, untaught idealist, sure of herself, hard from youth and inexperience. Though the leader in a misguided undertaking, doomed to learn of the folly of relying upon her own wisdom, she is yet drawn as a true woman at heart, with queen-like dignity and nobility of spirit. If she were not womanly, the Prince's love would seem improbable; if she were lacking in dignity, she would only be contemptible.

The Prince is a lover rather than a hero in the older sense of the term. He does not lack courage or power. But his force is mental and moral, not physical; he is modern. Had he been like his father, he would have seemed a barbarian to the Princess. To win her love he must command her respect; and the Prince, with his cultivated mind, his tolerance, his poetic temperament, is perhaps the only type of man whom the Princess, with her passionate belief in the cruelty and injustice of man to woman, could be brought to trust and love. His "weird seizures,"[1] those trance-like states in which the world of reality gives place to the world of the imagination, emphasize his poetic temperament, and, coming as they do at critical points of the story, suggest his imperfect adaptation to the world of action. He is rather of the dreamers, who see the world as it

[1] The passages concerning the "weird seizures" were not added until the edition of 1851. They are not unlike experiences with which Tennyson and other artists of vivid imagination have been familiar.

ought to be, and is the only man in the poem who has complete sympathy with the high ideals of the Princess. Like her, he hates brute force, injustice, and intolerance; with her he will join hands in attempting to improve the state of woman in her relation to man.

The Prince's friends.—Cyril and Florian are alike only in their friendship for the Prince. Florian is a gentleman of the true strain, courteous and refined, but lacking in positive and distinctive qualities. He wears his woman's garb and moves among the women without a false step, mindful of the proprieties, and in a humorous sympathy with their efforts. But Cyril is more rebelliously masculine. He persists in making manlike comments on all he sees, from the serious lecture to the pretty faces. His sense of humor is hard to keep in order. He wants "to break his chain," "to shake his mane and roar." He courts the sport of talking down the irate Lady Blanche. He finally betrays the disguise in sheer delight at shocking the proprieties. But he is brave and honorable. The Prince knows that Lady Psyche is safe in his hands. And at the tournament Cyril presses in to defend the Prince when in greatest danger.

The two kings are the best-drawn characters in the story. King Gama, thwarted and henpecked by the aggressive women in his court, ignored by his stalwart and warlike sons, hectored by the Prince's father, puzzled and perplexed by the turmoil around him, and yet courteous in manner, and oily and garrulous in comment and reminiscence, is interesting and amusing. A modified Polonius, he is a good foil to his lioness-like daughter, and inevitably suggests that it is the mother's character that his children have inherited. The Prince's father is of the opposite type. He "thought a king a king." He regarded "man as the hunter, women as his

game." He had no patience with ideals. He thought the story of the hereditary curse an "idiot legend." He is for war, on slight excuse, or none; he is barely restrained from joining in the tournament. To the Princess and her women he is the type of the brute and barbarian. And yet he could love the Prince's mother, and is almost dumb with grief when he thinks his son is dead.

Lady Blanche and Lady Psyche are also drawn as contrasts. Lady Blanche's eye shows in anger "the green malignant light of coming storm." She has a "vulture throat." She is filled with jealousy of her young and pretty rival. She cares more for her own honor than for the cause. She is a soured and disappointed woman, who says her husband was a fool. Her interest in women is based on her disbelief in men. Lady Psyche, too, is in the college from lack of home ties; she is also a widow, with a little child. But when the new arrivals ask what lecturer "is prettiest, best-natured," the students at once say Lady Psyche. She has no bitterness. She and the Princess have been like sisters. She seems "on the hither side of twenty summers"; her youth is yet before her; and when she yields to Cyril's love, it seems only right and fitting.

Melissa is the daughter of the "fool" who was Lady Blanche's husband, and leads us to think well of her father. She is all gaiety and innocence and beauty, a flower-like girl always treated by the poet like some fair blossom. She reminds us of "the little hearth-flower, Lilia, the mignonette of Vivian-place."

The child.—Tennyson said that Lady Psyche's child was the real hero of the poem. Technically, of course, she is not. But it is the influence of the child that begins to soften the heart of the Princess; to make her feel that she is a woman with a woman's love for chil-

dren; in short, to "mob her up with all the soft and milky rabble of womankind." It is the child, then, whose influence changes the course of the story and determines its issue.

The Theme of the Poem

The subject of the poem is the higher education of women in its relation to women's place in life. The Princess undertakes the great task of elevating her sex to a position of equality with men. She believes that learning is the sure and only means to this end. She refuses to admit into her scheme any recognition of essential differences of mind and heart in men and women. Her ideals are women who have played the parts of men. She will make the women men by force of intellect. She ignores the woman's need of love, of children, of the kindly offices of pity. Here is her fundamental error. Men and women are not alike in endowment or function. And so the failure of her scheme begins within the college walls. The women grow discontented. Her adherents fall from her. She finds herself at war with the order of things, and feels the pressure both from men and from women. She has, in brief, played the Quixotic part of attempting to regenerate one half the world without recognizing the laws of their nature. And it is only when she comes to see the problem as the Prince puts it, when her individual will and one-sided scheme of life give place to the fundamental laws of nature, that her true womanliness appears, and she finds herself again in right relations with the world.

> The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink
> Together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free.
>
> . . . . . .

For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse; could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain; his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She, mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man
Like perfect music unto noble words.

The solution of the problem of the poem is characteristically Tennysonian in its recognition of the triumph of natural laws. Unlike Browning, who cared most to portray the assertion and triumph of the individual over the rules and conventions of society, Tennyson liked to present life as under the control of law, as guided by great and beneficent tendencies to

One far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.

The Songs

The lyrical interludes, sung by the women, though in the poet's original plan, were not added until the edition of 1850. They are by far the best-known parts of the work. In their beauty of form and clear expression of universal emotion they are of the highest order of art. Their theme is the love of men and women, and their love of children. In the first, a husband and wife make up their little quarrel over the grave of their child. The second is a lullaby. The third begins with the glories of mountain, lake, and sunset over which the bugle's echoes roll, and ends with the thought of the echoes of the spirit passing from soul to soul through

generations yet to be. In the fourth the warrior is nerved to combat by the memory of his wife and babes. In the fifth the warrior's widow is saved from despair by her little one:

> Sweet my child, I live for thee.

The sixth is a song of a maiden yielding to love, as to one of the elemental forces of nature. Thus the songs both predict and interpret the meaning of the poem as a whole. And it is expressive of Tennyson's half-bantering, half-serious attitude that he has them sung by the women of the party, led by "little Lilia," who wished the men to make the Princess "six feet high, grand, epic, homicidal," but who puts her real thought and feeling into the tender womanliness of these exquisite songs.

Suggestions for the Study of the Poem

Tennyson said in a letter to Mrs. Howitt that he did not expect her to like this poem on the first reading, but did expect her to like it on the second. For most readers it is too complex, too various in its elements, to give up its meaning and spirit in one reading. At first it leaves a confused impression. But as the theme emerges, as the beauties of the various parts begin to stand out clearly, as the many allusions and involved expressions grow familiar, the poem yields more and more pleasure. One rapid reading, in which the unusual words and allusions are familiarized, and the drift of the story made clear, should prepare the reader for more detailed study. A second and more careful reading should consider the medley of form and elements, the delicate blending of banter, solemnity, and beauty, the richness of thought and allusion, the fitness of the somewhat ornate and embellished portions to the whole

scheme, and the gradual emergence of the deeper meaning of the poet. But those who confound love of beauty with effeminacy, those who can see no absurdity in ill-balanced schemes of reform, those who have no sense of humor, and those who can not recognize woman's right to share in the intellectual inheritance of the world, must have a change of heart before they can enjoy *The Princess*.

The mass of Tennysonian criticism is large and growing. For teachers and students interested in further information and comment than are contained in this volume, the editor especially recommends the following

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THE PRINCESS

A MEDLEY

PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough with their Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son,—the son
A Walter too,—with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,

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5. **Institute**, an association or organization for purposes of instruction.

Tennyson's son and biographer quotes from a letter of Edmund Lushington: Tennyson "was present on July 6, 1842, at a festival of the Maidstone Mechanics' Institute, held in our Park, of which he has introduced a lively description in the beginning of *The Princess*." See *Memoir of Tennyson*, I, 203. Edmund Lushington, "the accomplished Greek and German scholar and Egyptologist," had married Tennyson's sister, Miss Cecilia Tennyson.

10–24. Keep in mind this description, and compare it later with that of the palace of the Princess.

11. **Greek**, that is, after the Greek style of architecture.

Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And "This," he said "was Hugh's at Agincourt;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him"—which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights,
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd

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15. **Ammonites**, a species of fossil shell, spiral in shape; so called from their resemblance to the ram's horn on the images of the Egyptian deity, Ammon.

first bones of Time, fossil remains of extinct animals of the primeval world.

17. **celts**, stone hatchets used by primitive man.

calumets, the tobacco pipes of the North American Indians, used as symbols of peace or war.

18. **Claymore**, a heavy, two-handed sword, used by the Scottish Highlanders.

20. **Laborious . . . sphere.** Carved ivory spheres, one within the other, made by the Chinese and Japanese. Note how the line suggests, by its sound and movement, the tedious intricacy of the work.

21. **Malayan crease**, a short curved sword with waving edge.

25. **Agincourt** is famous for the victory won there in 1415 by the English over the French.

26. **Ascalon**, a city on the Mediterranean, near Jerusalem, was the scene of several conflicts between the Crusaders and the Mohammedans in the 12th century.

32–34. The prototype, in part, of the heroine of this poem.

Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

"O miracle of women," said the book,
"O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost—
Her stature more than mortal in the burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook:
O miracle of noble womanhood!"

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;
And, I all rapt in this, "Come out," he said,
"To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth
And sister Lilia with the rest." We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down thro' the park: strange was the sight to me;
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads:
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,
The fountain of the moment, playing, now

---

38. **bent . . . broke.** Intransitive verbs. Meaning?

58, ff. Note how this touch of modern life is woven into the story that follows. Note, too, the ornate manner in which Tennyson gives simple scientific experiments.

A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes
For azure views; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round the lake
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the knolls
A dozen angry models jetted steam:
A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
And dropt a fairy parachute and past:
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations; so that sport
Went hand in hand with Science; otherwhere
Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamor bowl'd
And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd about
Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light
And shadow, while the twangling violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time;
And long we gazed, but satiated at length
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,

---

76. **past.** A poetic use of the term common in Tennyson.

88. Note how the sound of the line resembles the thing described. What figure?

Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house; but all within
The sward was trim as any garden lawn:
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
From neighbor seats: and there was Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
Half child half woman as she was, had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
And there we join'd them: then the maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great; but we, unworthier, told
Of college: he had climb'd across the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
And he had breath'd the Proctor's dogs; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought
My book to mind: and opening this I read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang

---

93. **of**, that is, *made by*; **gave**, revealed.

98. **neighbor seats**, neighboring houses.

113. **Proctor's dogs**, English college boys' slang for Proctor's assistants.

116, 117. **grain veneer'd.** Explain the terms. Compare the descriptions here with Tennyson's poem, *A Character*.

With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness, and "Where,"
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
Beside him) "lives there such a woman now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are thousands now
Such women, but convention beats them down:
It is but bringing up; no more than that:
You men have done it: how I hate you all!
Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
That love to keep us children! O I wish
That I were some great princess, I would build
Far off from men a college like a man's,
And I would teach them all that men are taught;
We are twice as quick!" And here she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling "Pretty were the sight
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
If there were many Lilias in the brood,
However deep you might embower the nest,
Some boy would spy it."

---

133. **children.** Compare the Princess's saying about "losing the child."

134–136. The first definite suggestion of the story of *The Princess.*

141, 142. Note the effective alliteration.

143, 144. See the description of the men in their women's garb in the poem.

147–151. Foreshadowing of the plot.

At this upon the sward
She tapt her tiny silken-sandall'd foot:
"That's your light way; but I would make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make her, she:
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,
And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"
And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They lost their weeks; they vext the souls of deans;
They rode; they betted; made a hundred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.
"True," she said,
"We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did."

She held it out; and as a parrot turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd
And wrung it. "Doubt my word again!" he said.
"Come, listen! here is proof that you were miss'd:

161. **lost their weeks.** Lost the time required to make their residence at the college sufficient for the degree.

163. State the literal meaning of the line. Note the balance between this line and the next.

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;
And there we took one tutor as to read:
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square
Were out of season: never man, I think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,
And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you all
In wassail; often, like as many girls—
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—
As many little trifling Lilias—play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
And *what's my thought* and *when* and *where* and *how*,
And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
As here at Christmas."
She remember'd that:
A pleasant game, she thought: she liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,
She wonder'd, by themselves?
A half-disdain

---

177. **read**, the English college word for *study*.

178. Mathematics. A good example of Tennyson's pretty and fanciful way of saying common things; in this case in keeping with the general tone of the poem.

180. State the meaning literally.

181. **cloisters.** Arched and covered walks around the courts of monastic or college buildings.

189, ff. Further foreshadowing of the plan of the poem.

"In the Prologue the 'Tale from mouth to mouth' was a game which I have more than once played when I was at Trinity College, Cambridge, with my brother undergraduates. Of course, if he 'that inherited the tale' had not attended very carefully to his predecessors, there were contradictions; and if the story were historical, occasional anachronisms." Tennyson's note, quoted in the *Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 253.

192. **magic music**, a game in which a hidden article is sought, and the seeker guided by music, loud or soft as he is near or remote from the object of his search.

Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips;
And Walter nodded at me; "*He* began,
The rest would follow, each in turn; and so
We forged a sevenfold story. Kind? what kind?
Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now,
The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,"
Said Lilia; "Why not now?" the maiden Aunt.
"Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?
A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit the place,
Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn!"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd
And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt
(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face
With color) turn'd to me with "As you will;
Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine," clamored he,
"And make her some great Princess, six feet high,
Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!"

---

199. **Chimeras.** See an unabridged dictionary for the primary and secondary meanings of the word.

204. **a winter's tale.** The allusion is, of course, to Shakespeare's play of this name.

218–220. The germ of the character of the Princess, humorously conceived as a "new woman" by the men.

"Then follow me, the Prince,"
I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn!
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—
Heroic seems our Princess as required—
But something made to suit with Time and place,
A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments
For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all—
This *were* a medley! we should have him back
Who told the 'Winter's tale' to do it for us.
No matter: we will say whatever comes.
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space."
So I began,
And the rest follow'd; and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the songs.

I

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

221–229. Note how much of this is reproduced in the story.

231. See note on 204.

238. Note the beauty with which Tennyson here and elsewhere uses nature.

239. The songs did not appear in the first version of the poem, although, as Tennyson afterward said, they were a part of the original conception.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know
The shadow from the substance, and that one
Should come to fight with shadows and to fall:
For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:
On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd "catalepsy."
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness:
But my good father thought a king a king;
He cared not for the affection of the house;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
For judgment.
Now it chanced that I had been,

---

7. Compare the German story of *Peter Schlemihl*, the man without a shadow.

8–10. Compare the curse in Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, Chapters i, xviii, and xx.

14. **weird seizures.** See Introduction, pp. xix, xx.

19. **court-Galen.** Galen was a celebrated Greek physician, scientist, and philosopher, of the second century, A. D. His name, like those of Hippocrates and of the mythical Æsculapius, has come to be used in the generic sense.

While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
To one, a neighboring Princess: she to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old; and still from time to time
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress; and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,
My father sent ambassadors with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back
A present, a great labor of the loom;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;
He said there was a compact; that was true:
But then she had a will; was he to blame?
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:
The first, a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

---

31. **in bud and blade.** Give the literal meaning.

33. **proxy-wedded.** In feudal times the ceremony of wedding by proxy was not uncommon. The "bootless calf" refers to that part of the ceremony in which the proxy placed the leg bared to the knee upon the bed.

50. **presence room.** The room in which a king or other potentate gives audiences.

56. **twinn'd . . . eye.** Note the accuracy of the simile.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face
Grow long and troubled like the rising moon,
Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. "My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
May rue the bargain made." And Florian said:
"I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land:
Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean."
And Cyril whisper'd: "Take me with you too."
Then laughing "What, if these weird seizures come
Upon you in those lands, and no one near
To point you out the shadow from the truth!
Take me: I'll serve you better in a strait;
I grate on rusty hinges here:" but "No!"
Roar'd the rough king, "you shall not; we ourself

57–66. See the general characterization of the king, lines 25–30.

58. Tennyson frequently uses in *The Princess* comparisons that have a humorous suggestion. See Introduction, p. xvii.

85, 87–89. Give the literal meanings.

Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
In iron gauntlets: break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and past
Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town;
Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out;
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed
In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees:
What were those fancies? wherefore break her troth?
Proud look'd the lips: but while I meditated
A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild woods together; and a Voice
Went with it, "Follow, follow, thou shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield, I stole from court
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread
To hear my father's clamor at our backs
With Ho! from some bay-window shake the night;
But all was quiet: from the bastion'd walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
And flying reach'd the frontier: then we crost
To a livelier land; and so by tilth and grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,
We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small his voice,
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind

100–101. These ornate and fanciful comparisons are frequent in *The Princess*, and in harmony with its general character. See Introduction, p. xviii.

109, 110. **tilth, grange, bosks.** Are these words in any way peculiarly suited to the passages in which they occur?

114–115. Note the striking comparison. Is it apt, or vivid?

On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king: three days he feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
And my betroth'd. "You do us, Prince," he said,
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
"All honor. We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
With my full heart: but there were widows here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;
They fed her theories, in and out of place
Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harp'd on this; with this our banquets rang;
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk;
Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
To hear them: knowledge, so my daughter held,
Was all in all: they had but been, she thought,
As children; they must lose the child, assume
The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
But all she is and does is awful; odes
About this losing of the child; and rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason: these the women sang;

116. **without a star**: not wearing any badge or decoration.

121–122. Probably a memory of Polonius, whom Gama is not unlike. See *Hamlet*, II, 2: "and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love." See also V, 198–9 of this poem.

129. **husbandry**. Probably intended as a pun.

136. **lose the child**. Compare the Prologue, line 133.

137–139. **awful**. In a sense half-way between the real meaning and the colloquial use.

And they that know such things—I sought but peace;
No critic I—would call them masterpieces:
They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a boon,
A certain summer-palace which I have
Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,
Yet being an easy man, gave it: and there,
All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more
We know not,—only this: they see no men,
Not even her brother Arac, nor the twins
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her
As on a kind of paragon; and I
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but since
(And I confess with right) you think me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to her;
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
Almost at naked nothing."
Thus the king;
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode
Many a long league back to the North. At last
From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,
We dropt with evening on a rustic town
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
Close at the boundary of the liberties;

---

160. Note how well the old man's point of view is maintained throughout this speech, and how his good-natured futility is revealed.

168, 169. This love of the picturesque is common in Tennyson, and especially so in this poem.

170. **liberties.** A region set aside in which certain powers and privileges are granted to the holder.

There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host
To council, plied him with his richest wines,
And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long, low sibilation, stared
As blank as death in marble; then exclaim'd
Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go: but as his brain
Began to mellow, "If the king," he said,
"Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?
The king would bear him out;" and at the last—
The summer of the vine in all his veins—
"No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
She once had passed that way; he heard her speak;
She scared him; life! he never saw the like;
She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave:
And he, he reverenced his liege-lady there;
He always made a point to post with mares;
His daughter and his housemaid were the boys:
The land, he understood, for miles about
Was till'd by women; all the swine were sows,
And all the dogs"—
But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented Maid,
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, holp

---

175. **death in marble.** Meaning?

181. **The summer of the vine**, etc. Meaning? Compare Tennyson's *Geraint and Enid*, l. 397, "For now the wine made summer in his veins."

192, 193. See the Prologue.

198. **holp**, the older form of the preterit.

To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars;
And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd
A little street half garden and half house;
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouted up and showering down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.

204, ff. See note on 198, 199.

207. This sort of emblematic adornment of the college and its grounds appears throughout the whole poem.

209–210. **inscription . . . deep in shadow.** See II, 177, 178, 207–210, and III, 125–127.

212–218. The poem is filled with appeals not only to the eye, but to the other senses.

219. The Greek goddess of wisdom and of war. See note on l. 207.

Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,
And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche," she said,
"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are we,"
One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East:

"Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils."
This I seal'd:
The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes:
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
To float about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

233, 234. The simile is borrowed from Homer. See *The Iliad*, II, 147, 148.

238, 239. The seal serves at once as the point of view of the men, and as playful prophecy of the issue of the story.

243–245. The imaginative and effective endings of the various parts of *The Princess* are among its most striking features. Compare especially the endings of Parts II, III, and IV.

The note of hope in the last line may be construed as a hint of the happy ending that befits "a summer's tale."

II

As thro' the land at eve we went,
  And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
  And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
  That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
  And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
  We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
  We kiss'd again with tears.

This interlude is the first of the love motives—almost all of them thus including the love of children—which indicate the "law and impulse" that solve the plot of the story. With gentle irony the poet has these interludes sung by the women of the party.

At break of day the College Portress came:
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold; and now when these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited: out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst;
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,
All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
Than our man's earth; such eyes were in her head,
And so much grace and power, breathing down
From over her arch'd brows, with every turn
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said:

2–5. See the Prologue, 102, 103, and 142–144. The lilac was the color of Lady Psyche, whose lectures the visitors had chosen.

8, 9. **sang . . . with laurel.** What is meant?

20–26. The extravagance of the description is in keeping with the nature of the "amorous" Prince, and with the high pitch of the serious parts of the poem.

"We give you welcome: not without redound
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,
And that full voice which circles round the grave,
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
What! are the ladies of your land so tall?"
"We of the court" said Cyril. "From the court"
She answer'd, "then ye know the Prince?" and he:
"The climax of his age! as tho' there were
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
He worships your ideal:" she replied:
"We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
This barren verbiage, current among men,
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and of power;
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,
We dream not of him: when we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourself
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting; then an officer
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:
Not for three years to correspond with home;

---

30. **the stranger**: those outside the realm of King Gama.

35. Why does she inquire about the Prince? See also III, 204, and V, 397. Compare this fact with the ending of the story, and with the theme of the interludes which the women sing.

44. **still the child.** Recall King Gama's description of his daughter's odes.

Not for three years to cross the liberties;
Not for three years to speak with any men;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We enter'd on the boards: and "Now," she cried,
"Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!
Our statues!—not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene

---

63. **Odalisques**, female slaves in an Oriental harem. **oracles of mode**, leaders of fashion.

65. **That taught the Sabine.** Numa, one of the early kings of Rome, a Sabine by birth, was said to have received his wise counsel from a forest nymph, Egeria.

66. **Foundress of the Babylonian wall.** Semiramis, said to have been queen and builder of Babylon, about 2200 B. C.

67. **Carian Artemisia**, who assisted Xerxes in the battle of Salamis, 480 B. C.

68. **Rhodope.** An Egyptian queen, also called Nitocris. Herodotus says that she lived after the date of the building of the pyramids. See Herodotus, II, 134, 135.

69. **Clelia.** "A Roman virgin, who was one of the hostages given to Porsena with other maidens and boys, and who is said to have escaped from the Etruscan camp, and to have swum across the Tiber to Rome. She was sent back by the Romans to Porsena, who was so struck with her gallant deed that he not only set her at liberty, but allowed her to take with her a part of the hostages; she chose those under age, as they were most exposed to ill treatment." Quoted in Cook's edition of *The Princess.*

Cornelia. The daughter of Scipio Africanus, and the mother of the Gracchi, whose wisdom and virtues the Romans honored by erecting a statue. She is known as the type of Roman womanhood and motherhood.

the Palmyrene. Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, in the third century, A. D. She ruled after her husband's death, and led her armies against the Romans under the emperor Aurelian. She was defeated and brought captive to Rome.

That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
Convention, since to look on noble forms
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O lift your natures up:
Embrace our aims: work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before;
For they press in from all the provinces,
And fill the hive."
She spoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal: back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,
There sat along the forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaïa slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame

---

71. **Agrippina**, the granddaughter of Augustus, was, like Cornelia, another typical Roman matron, cultured, wise, and courageous.

81. **harangue**. See the dictionary for the direct and the suggestive meanings of the word.

87, 88. The comparison is again, of course, from the point of view of the men.

97. **the dame**, etc. The wife of the miser, King Midas, who un-

That whisper'd "Asses' ears," among the sedge,
"My sister." "Comely, too, by all that's fair,"
Said Cyril. "O hush, hush!" and she began.

"This world was once a fluid haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets: then the monster, then the man;
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate;
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
Among the lowest."
Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in each,

---

burdened herself of her husband's secret by whispering "Asses' ears!" to the reeds in the marsh.

101–165. Lady Psyche's lecture is, in its wide sweep, either a satire upon the women's college, or, more probably, is made so inclusive in order to indicate the range of subjects studied in the college.

105. **woaded**, painted.

109. **ungracious**, in its treatment of woman.

110. **Amazons**. The Amazons are familiar in Greek legend as a mythical race of warlike females dwelling in the region of the Caucasus. See a classical dictionary.

112. **Lycian custom**. "They have one custom peculiar to themselves. . . . They take their name from their mothers, and not from their fathers." Herodotus, I, 173. This custom is now known to be common also among primitive races.

113. **Lar and Lucumo** were, among the Etruscans, titles of honor like the English *Lord*.

lay at wine refers, of course, to the custom of taking their meals in a reclining position.

How far from just; till warming with her theme
She fulmined out her scorn of laws Salique
And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to chivalry:
When some respect, however slight, was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However then commenced the dawn: a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which made
Woman and man. She had founded; they must build.
Here might they learn whatever men were taught:
Let them not fear: some said their heads were less:
Some men's were small; not they the least of men;
For often fineness compensated size:
Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew
With using; thence the man's, if more was more;
He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field: some ages had been lost;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious names

---

117. **laws Salique.** The Salic law, established by Charles the Great in Germany, forbade the inheritance of land by or through females.

118. **Little-footed China**, in allusion to the binding of the feet of female children.

Mahomet, or Mohammed (570–632 A. D.), the prophet and founder of Mohammedanism. Psyche's scorn of him may be due to his saying that women have no souls, or to the popular notion of the Mohammedan heaven as a sort of beatified harem.

121. Why does she call chivalry "superstition all awry"?

125. **to her**, that is, to the Princess.

131–139. Lady Psyche's arguments are still heard in woman's-rights conventions.

Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
With woman: and in arts of government
Elizabeth and others; arts of war
The peasant Joan and others; arts of grace
Sappho and others vied with any man:
And, last not least, she who had left her place,
And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future; "everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the mind;
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

---

144. **Verulam**, Lord Bacon.

146. **Elizabeth.** See Green's *History of the English People* for an interesting account of Queen Elizabeth's character and ability.

147. **the peasant Joan**, Joan of Arc, who led the French forces against the English.

148. **Sappho**, the Greek poetess. See Wharton's edition of her extant poetry.

149. **she**, again the Princess.

155–164. Not unlike the answer to the problem of the poem given in Part VII.

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
Began to address us, and was moving on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried,
"My brother!" "Well, my sister." "O," she said,
"What do you here? and in this dress? and these?
Why, who are these? a wolf within the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!"
"No plot, no plot," he answer'd. "Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?"
"And if I had," he answer'd, "who could think
The softer Adams of your Academe,
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such
As chanted on the blanching bones of men?"
"But you will find it otherwise" she said.
"You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! my vow
Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,
That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,
The Princess." "Well then, Psyche, take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning: bury me beside the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones;
Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of womankind."
"Let me die too," said Cyril, "having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche."
I struck in:

---

177. Why had he not seen the inscription?

180. **softer Adams.** Meaning?

193–194. Cyril is evidently the most incorrigible of the three. See the description of him in Part I.

"Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,
And thus (what other way was left) I came."
"O Sir, O Prince, I have no country; none;
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the thunderbolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls."
"Yet pause," I said: "for that inscription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows? war;
Your own work marr'd: for this your Academe,
Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
With all fair theories only made to gild
A stormless summer." "Let the Princess judge
Of that," she said: "farewell, Sir—and to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoin'd,
"The fifth in line from that old Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,

---

204. **vestal.** See the dictionary for the meaning and origin of the word.

209. **garth,** yard, or garden. Note the similarity of form in these three words of common origin.

And all else fled? we point to it, and we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian added; "she
With whom I sang about the morning hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming draught
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom
I would be that for ever which I seem,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
And glean your scatter'd sapience."

Then once more,
"Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,
"That on her bridal morn before she past
From all her old companions, when the king
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
That were there any of our people there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them? look! for such are these and I."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd, "to whom,
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.

233-234. **draught of fever.** Paraphrase.
239-241. Note the unflattering implication.

That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.
O by the bright head of my little niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,
"The mother of the sweetest little maid,
That ever crow'd for kisses."
"Out upon it!"
She answer'd, "peace! and why should I not play
The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great: he for the common weal,
The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good need were,
Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from right to save
A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet—
Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise
You perish) as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
These women were too barbarous, would not learn;
They fled, who might have shamed us: promise, all."

What could we else, we promised each; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms

---

263. **Spartan Mother.** It was an ideal of the Spartans to repress all emotions.

264. **Lucius Junius Brutus**, who, while consul at Rome, about 500 B.C., condemned his two sons to death for conspiring to restore the tyrannical Tarquins to the government of Rome.

Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:
"I knew you at the first: tho' you have grown
You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. *I* give thee to death,
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well?"
With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious dews
Began to glisten and to fall: and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
"I brought a message here from Lady Blanche."
Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's color) with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, "Ah—Melissa—you!
You heard us?" and Melissa, "O pardon me;
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,

285. But see ll. 168–171. Has Tennyson forgotten?

301–307. Melissa is the flower-like maiden of the story, always introduced by the poet in some halo of beauty, and yet made more real than some of the more important characters.

Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to death."
"I trust you," said the other, "for we two
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine:
But yet your mother's jealous temperament—
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
My honor, these their lives." "Ah, fear me not,"
Replied Melissa; "no—I would not tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."
"Be it so" the other, "that we still may lead
The new light up, and culminate in peace,
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."
Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest man
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls
Of Lebanonian cedar; nor should you

---

319. **Danaid.** The Danaids, for the murder of their husbands, were condemned eternally to the attempt to fill leaking vessels. See any Greek mythology for the story.

Cook asks, "Do these young women talk naturally, or does Tennyson make them talk in such a way as to enable him to indulge in graceful and learned allusion?" But is it not natural for these women to make a point of indulging in graceful and learned allusion?

320. **ruin.** Note the intransitive use of the verb.

323. **Aspasia**, a gifted and learned Athenian woman, said to have been mistress of Pericles and a favorite among the cultured men of the period.

325. **Sheba.** That is, the queen of Sheba. It is an old usage to call a sovereign by the name of his country. See *King Lear*, I, i, and elsewhere in Shakespeare.

Sheba, or Saba, was a province of Arabia, familiar to English readers through Milton's

"Sabæan odors from the spicy shore
Of Araby the blest."—*Par. Lost.*

See 1 *Kings* x, 1, for the incident here referred to.

331. For references to the cedar of Lebanon, much prized by build-

(Tho', Madam, *you* should answer, *we* would ask)
Less welcome find among us, if you came
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more." He said not what,
But "Thanks," she answer'd "Go: we have been too long
Together: keep your hoods about the face;
They do so that affect abstraction here.
Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold
Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
And held her round the knees against his waist,
And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child
Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd;
And thus our conference closed.
And then we stroll'd
For half the day thro' stately theatres
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
The circle rounded under female hands
With flawless demonstration: follow'd then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thunderous Epic lilted out
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all

---

ers, see *Ps.* xcii, 12, 2 *Sam.* vii, 2 and 7, and elsewhere in the Old Testament.

338. **affect.** Serious or ironical?

349–351. How has the poet already described the same science?

353. Why lilted? With what word is it in antithesis?

355–357. One of the memorable passages in English poetry. Remember it.

That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame, the rock,
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and known;
Till like three horses that have broken fence
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke:
"Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we."
"They hunt old trails" said Cyril "very well;
But when did woman ever yet invent?"
"Ungracious!" answer'd Florian; "have you learnt
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad?"
"O trash" he said, "but with a kernel in it.
Should I not call her wise, who made me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;

358–362. Can you name the subjects or sciences thus suggested as part of the course of study of the college?

360. **frame**, the body.

365. **corn.** Remember that among the English this word differs in meaning from that in the United States. How?

366. See the note on Lady Psyche's lecture, p. 25.

368–370. Sum up the various things in Cyril's attitude toward the college and its inmates which would especially displease the Princess.

377. **Muse.** Who and what were the Muses?

384. See a classical dictionary for the story of Cupid and Psyche.

He cleft me thro' the stomacher; and now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere
I know the substance when I see it. Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?
For dear are those three castles to my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double worth,
And much I might have said, but that my zone
Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O to hear
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my mane: but thou,
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;
Abate the stride which speaks of man, and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out of time
Will wonder why they came: but hark the bell
For dinner, let us go!"

And in we stream'd
Among the columns, pacing staid and still

---

385. **stomacher.** Cyril is still humorously conscious of his disguise.

390–398. Is Cyril merely a fortune-hunter? Is Tennyson here giving to Cyril the standard of an earlier time, or of the present?

391–392. To what is the allusion? See I, 7–10.

399. Obviously an intentional pun.

403–410. Cook compares with this the passage in *As You Like It*, I, III, 117, ff., where Rosalind tells what she must do to counterfeit a man.

By twos and threes, till all from end to end
With beauties every shade of brown and fair
In colors gayer than the morning mist,
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
How might a man not wander from his wits
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
The second-sight of some Astræan age,
Sat compass'd with professors: they, the while,
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:
A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms
Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.
At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there
One walk'd reciting by herself, and one
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smooth'd a petted peacock down with that:
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat; some hid and sought
In the orange thickets: others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again

414, ff. Note here and elsewhere how Tennyson achieves the effects of mass and brilliancy of color.

420. **Astræan.** Astræa, goddess of justice, last of the gods to leave the earth, and expected to return with the Golden Age, or millennium; hence "Astræan age" means the age of perfect happiness and wisdom.

427. State in literal form. Why did Lady Blanche hate the new arrivals?

431, ff. Notice here and elsewhere the elaborate and ornate nature of the college grounds and buildings; ornament and structure are found in Renaissance taste and profusion.

With laughter: others lay about the lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May
Was passing: what was learning unto them?
They wish'd to marry; they could rule a house;
Men hated learned women: but we three
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harm'd not: then day droopt; the chapel bells
Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt with those
Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.

439–442. Another evidence of the unsubstantial nature of the Princess's scheme.

443. **the Fates.** See a dictionary. How true or suggestive is the comparison?

448–455. Note the Miltonic quality of these lines; their richness of picture and beauty of sound, their religious feeling, and the rise and fall in the *swell* of the clauses. Where does the cadence begin to decline to the pitch of the song that follows?

Tennyson once told in a visit to Cambridge University "how he had idealized Nevile's Court in *The Princess*, and how the 'six hundred maidens clad in purest white' was taken from the striking memory of the white-surpliced undergraduates in Trinity Chapel; and he described the effect of the Trinity organ upon him." See the *Memoir of Tennyson*, by his son, Vol. II, p. 152.

III

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea !
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me ;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon :
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

See the Introduction, p. xxiv, for general comment upon these lyrical interludes.

Note here the skilful repetitions, the pictures of Nature and their harmony with the thought and feeling. Recall the familiar music to which Barnby has set this song.

Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with care
Descended to the court that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears;
"And fly," she cried, "O fly, while yet you may!
My mother knows:" and when I asked her "how,"
"My fault" she wept "my fault! and yet not mine;
Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have been the Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;
And so it was agreed when first they came;
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
And she the left, or not or seldom used;
Hers more than half the students, all the love.
And so last night she fell to canvass you:
Her countrywomen! she did not envy her.
'Who ever saw such wild barbarians?

1–2. A Homeric type of introduction. See *Iliad*, Books VIII and XIX.

6. Why native East?

10, 11. See the poetic tinge given to the perhaps not wholly beautiful result of Melissa's weeping.

22. or . . . or, common in poetry for *either* . . . *or*.

24, ff. Are Lady Blanche's envy and suspicion and Melissa's innocence well described? Would line 40 naturally have followed or preceded 42?

Girls?—more like men!' and at these words the snake,
My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;
And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd:
'O marvellously modest maiden, you!
Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been men
You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am shamed
That I must needs repeat for my excuse
What looks so little graceful: 'men' (for still
My mother went revolving on the word)
'And so they are,—very like men indeed—
And with that woman closeted for hours!'
Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
'Why—these—*are*—men:' I shudder'd: 'and you know it.'
'O ask me nothing,' I said: 'And she knows too,
And she conceals it.' So my mother clutch'd
The truth at once, but with no word from me;
And now thus early risen she goes to inform
The Princess: Lady Psyche will be crush'd;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly:
But heal me with your pardon ere you go."
"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?"
Said Cyril: "Pale one, blush again: than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven,"
He added, "lest some classic Angel speak
In scorn of us, 'They mounted, Ganymedes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.'

55–56. For **Ganymede** and **Vulcan**, see a classical dictionary. See also *Iliad*, I, 590–594, and *Paradise Lost*, I, 740–746, for the Vulcan incident here alluded to.

But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough:" and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. "Tell us," Florian ask'd,
"How grew this feud betwixt the right and left."
"O long ago," she said, "betwixt these two
Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her!) she was wedded to a fool;
And still she rail'd against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.
But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida: they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inosculated;
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;
One mind in all things: yet my mother still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love:
She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:
But I must go: I dare not tarry," and light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her,
"An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she: how pretty

---

59. **doubtful curls.** A common classic idiom. What does it mean?

67. Does Tennyson mean us to infer anything of the father from the daughter?

74. **Consonant.** Meaning? What pronunciation does the meter demand?

80. Note the expressive charm of the figure.

83. Of course, another foreshadowing.

Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psychè whom she drags in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,
But in her own grand way: being herself
Three times more noble than three score of men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but—ah she—whene'er she moves
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task," he cried;

---

86 and 91, ff. Which is the juster estimate of the Princess?

90. **clang.** Meaning?

97. **Hebes.** See a classical dictionary.

99. **Here** or **Hera**, a Greek goddess, wife of Zeus and queen of Olympus.

100. The statue of **Memnon** in Thebes was fabled to give forth sweet music when "smitten by the morning sun." What is the fitness of the figure here?

103. **balusters.** Pronounce. Note the unusual accent.

104. **empurpled.** Meaning? Have you seen such effects?

"No fighting shadows here! I forced a way
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there
At point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who we were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answered sharply that I talk'd astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
And our three lives. True—we had limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she said,
'So puddled as it is with favoritism.'
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:
Her answer was 'Leave me to deal with that.'
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand years,

---

116. Is the description accurate? effective?

123. Note the poetic condensation.

123–151. By what arguments is Lady Blanche won? Do you think this is quite natural?

I recommenced: 'Decide not ere you pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third—the authentic foundress you.
I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:
Wink at our advent; help my prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you
Some palace in our land, where you shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time
For ever.' Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
"That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should find the land
Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
Out yonder:" then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,

---

167. See the Introduction, pp. xix, xx.

Her college and her maidens empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe;
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said:
"O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;
Unwillingly we spake." "No—not to her,"
I answer'd, "but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say."
"Again?" she cried, "are you ambassadresses
From him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license: speak, and let the topic die."

I stammer'd that I knew him—could have wish'd—
"Our king expects—was there no precontract?
There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but long'd
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him even to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair."

"Poor boy," she said, "can he not read—no books?
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise?
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;

As girls were once, as we ourself have been:
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them:
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
Being other—since we learnt our meaning here,
To lift the woman's fall'n divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile
"And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,
At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
She kept her state, and left the drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

"Alas, your Highness breathes full East," I said,
"On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,
I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
To assail this gray preëminence of man!
You grant me license; might I use it? think;
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail;
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,
Love, children, happiness?"

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204. See note on II, 35.

212. For the story of **Vashti**, see the Book of *Esther*.

214. **Shushan**, once the capital of Persia, the *Sousa* of the *Anabasis* and of ancient history.

215. **breathes full East**, echoes the Princess's reference to the East, but means that her words are sharp, like the east wind.

218. **gray**. Ancient.

And she exclaim'd,
"Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!
What! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?
You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to thus:
Yet will we say for children, would they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:
But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die;
They with the sun and moon renew their light
For ever, blessing those that look on them.
Children—that men may pluck them from our hearts,
Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—
O—children—there is nothing upon earth
More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err: nor would we work for fame;
Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
Who learns the one POU STO whence after-hands
May move the world, tho' she herself effect
But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living, each, a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone."

---

230. What has angered the Princess—the talk of love or the prediction of failure in her plans?

234–235. For what part of the story is this a preparation?

237–240. These words show the Princess to be an idealist.

246. POU STO, an abbreviation of the Greek Δὸς ποῦ στῶ, Give me a place where I may stand. Archimedes, the Greek mathematician, is reported to have said, "Give me a place where I may stand, and I will raise the earth with a lever."

254. The Princess appropriately talks in the terms of geology. What is her meaning, stated literally?

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;
We are used to that: for women, up till this
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,
Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof—
Oh if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches, than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breath of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd

261. The **taboo** was the mark put upon an object by the priests of the South Sea Islanders when they wished to appropriate it for religious uses, or for themselves.

269. This first type of sacrifice was probably suggested by the story of Publius Decius Mus, the Roman general who rushed to his death upon the spears of the enemy in order to save his army; or by the action of Arnold von Winkelried, the Swiss patriot who broke an opening for his comrades by receiving the spears of the enemy in his body.

270. Probably in allusion to the legend of Curtius. See a classical dictionary.

277. The mastodonic remains have already appeared in the Prologue. See the Prologue, line 15.

Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be." "Dare we dream of that," I ask'd,
"Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,
That practice betters?" "How," she cried, "you love
The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
For there are schools for all." "And yet" I said,
"Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic." "Nay, we thought of that,"
She answer'd, "but it pleased us not: in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we came,

---

284. The prize for excellence in metaphysics is, be it noted, a very feminine article, though bearing the image of **Diotima,** the instructress of Socrates.

286. **our device,** that is, the emblem of the college.

290. **anatomic,** that is, for the study of the human body.

292, ff. The Princess's feelings are womanly, and often in control of her judgment. Her comments often show rightness of feeling with deflections of reason.

294. In allusion to the experiments in inoculating animals with the germs of diseases.

299. **hangs.** That is, is not yet decided. An unsettled lawsuit is said to be *pendens*, or *pendent*, i. e., hanging.

This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your question now,
Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so:
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;
And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light: but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought and make
One act a phantom of succession: thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time;
But in the shadow will we work, and mould
The woman to the fuller day."
She spake
With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
On flowering levels underneath the crag,
Full of all beauty. "O how sweet" I said
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask)
"To linger here with one that loved us." "Yea,"
She answer'd, "or with fair philosophies
That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers
Built to the Sun:" then, turning to her maids,
"Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna's triumph; here she stood,

303–304. Of course, an unconscious prophecy.

324. **Elysian.** See dictionary.

331. **Corinna.** A Greek lyric poetess, said to have been the instructor of Pindar, and to have triumphed over him five times in poetical contests.

Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
The woman-conqueror; woman conquer'd there
The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
And all the men mourn'd at his side: but we
Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
In the dark crag: and then we turn'd, we wound
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

338–347. Note the beauty of this ending: how the movement of the lines is now abrupt and broken, like the motions described, now serene, like the feeling inspired by the sunset; how the clinking of the hammers and the roughness of the geological names are contrasted with the musical smoothness of the last two lines; and how the whole passage puts one in the mood appropriate to the exquisite Bugle Song that follows.

IV

The splendor falls on castle walls
  And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
  And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
  And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
  The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
  They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
  And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

For an analysis of the theme of this song, see Introduction, p. xxiii.

The scene in the poet's mind here was the now well-known Lakes of Killarney in Ireland. It was this song that made them a famous resort for lovers of romantic scenery.

"There sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound"
Said Ida "let us down and rest"; and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and cleft,
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where below
No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank
Our elbows; on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, "Let some one sing to us: lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music:" and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

1-2. In allusion to the "nebular hypothesis," so called, of La Place. Its essence is stated in Lady Psyche's lecture.

4-8. Another example of Tennyson's fine observation.

21-40. The pleasures of beautiful and romantic melancholy have seldom been better expressed than in this song. The absence of the rhyme, usual to lyrics, is scarcely noted, so musical are the verses. Note the pleasing recurrences of certain common forms, as in lines 21 and 22, and in the position of the characteristic adjective in lines 26, 28, and 30.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears; when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

She ended with such passion that the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain
Answer'd the Princess, "If indeed there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old bygones be,
While down the streams that float us each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,

---

43. Why in disdain? Is the Princess conscious that these feelings menace her plans and hopes because they are so much a part of human nature? In this and other scenes Tennyson claims for his heroine the ancient and aristocratic privilege of showing superiority by being rude.

46, ff. The allusion is to the Sirens. See the *Odyssey*, Book XII.

51-70. The Princess's impatience of the past is also characteristic of the doctrinaire reformer.

Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their time
Toward that great year of equal mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
Found golden: let the past be past: let be
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough kex break
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown goat
Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle, burns
Above the unrisen morrow:" then to me
"Know you no song of your own land," she said,
"Not such as moans about the retrospect,
But deals with the other distance and the hues
Of promise; not a death's-head at the wine?"

Then I remember'd one myself had made,
What time I watch'd the swallow winging south
From mine own land, part made long since, and part
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

"O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

"O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

"O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

---

59. **Babels.** See *Genesis* xi. **kex**, the hemlock.

59–61. Note the correspondence of sound and image, and the picturesqueness of the scene.

"O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

"Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

"O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

"O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

"O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,
And knew not what they meant; for still my voice
Rang false: but smiling "Not for thee," she said,
"O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil: marsh-divers, rather, maid,
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake

100–102. Ulysses had remained away from his home in Ithaca long after the other heroes of the Trojan war had returned. Supposing him to be dead, the insistent suitors for the hand of his wife, Penelope, had taken possession of his house and filled it with wasteful and insolent riot. After Ulysses had returned in disguise, and the hour of their doom was near, the goddess Athene gave to their minds a touch of madness, so that they "laughed as with other men's jaws." *Odyssey*, XX, 347. Are the borrowed phrase and reference suitable here? Why?

104. In allusion to the Persian myth that the nightingale (**Bulbul**) sang his love to the rose. **Gulistan** is the Persian word for rose-garden.

106. **meadow-crake**, a bird of the rail family. Its "cry may be so exactly imitated by drawing the blade of a knife across an indented

Grate her harsh kindred in the grass: and this
A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,
We hold them slight: they mind us of the time
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
And dress the victim to the offering up,
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
Poor soul! I had a maid of honor once;
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.
So they blaspheme the muse! But great is song
Used to great ends: ourself have often tried
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd
The passion of the prophetess; for song
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
Of spirit than to junketing and love.
Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and this
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered

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bone, or the thumb over a small-toothed comb, that by these means the bird may be decoyed within sight." *Century Dictionary.*

110. In allusion to the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt.

115-118. Possibly a reminiscence of the love-lorn maid of Desdemona's musings. See *Othello*, IV, iii.

119. **blaspheme.** In what sense?

119-123. See I, 137-145, and II, 453-455.

121. **Valkyrian.** The Valkyrs, now familiar through Wagner's operas, were, in Norse mythology, the warlike handmaidens of Odin, who rode through the air in battle, to designate the heroes who were to be slain, and afterward to conduct them to Valhalla, the eternal battle-ground and hall of feasting which constituted the Norse heaven.

126. **Hymen,** the classical god of marriage.

129. **sphered,** centered.

Whole in ourselves and owed to none. Enough!
But now to leaven play with profit, you,
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,
That gives the manners of your country-women?"

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had wrought,
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;
"Forbear," the Princess cried; "Forbear, Sir" I;
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love,
I smote him on the breast; he started up;
There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
Melissa clamor'd "Flee the death;" "To horse"
Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and fled, as flies
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,
When some one batters at the dovecote doors,
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof,
And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,
"The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head!"
For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom:
There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch

140. Probably the song found in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.
160. From what glow?

Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,
No more; but woman-vested as I was
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew
My burthen from mine arms; they cried "she lives:"
They bore her back into the tent: but I,
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on foot
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up

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166. "Mark the exquisite irony of this line. As though his struggle in the water was rendered the harder by the fact that on the lady rested the fate of this great movement!" This is the true touch of ironical banter. There is a similar idea in the Roman poet Statius, where the baby Apollo is represented as depressing by his divine weight the edge of the island of Delos as he crawls along it. Cf. 531–2 (Wallace).

The same idea is involved in the familiar legend of St. Christopher, the brave and strong ferryman who staggers under the weight of the infant Jesus.

172. **glimmeringly grouped**, expressive of both the appearance and motion of the scene.

176. **a kind of shame.** At what?

180–181. What are meant by **Indian craft** and **beelike instinct?**

183. **Caryatids**, figures of women in stone, used as pillars.

A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
Of open-work in which the hunter rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.
A step
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this were she,"
But it was Florian. "Hist O hist," he said,
"They seek us: out so late is out of rules.
Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the cry.
How came you here?" I told him: "I" said he,
"Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.
Arriving all confused among the rest
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each

---

184. **valves**, folding doors.

185–188. Do you get the picture? What does it symbolize?

194. **the Bear.** The constellation in the northern sky, shaped like a dipper, whose two outer stars always point toward the north-star.

207. Judith, a Jewish woman, went into the camp of the enemy, and, beguiling their leader Holofernes with her beauty, found an opportunity to cut off his head. The story is told in the Book of *Judith*, found in the Apocrypha of the Old Testament.

Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all,
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:
And then, demanded if her mother knew,
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;
And I slipt out: but whither will you now?
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled:
What, if together? that were not so well.
Would rather we had never come! I dread
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I
That struck him: this is proper to the clown,
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
That which he says he loves: for Cyril, howe'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song
Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips
Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament:
But as the water lily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."

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217. **either guilt**, that is, the guilt of both.

227. **clown**, the rustic, or the lowly born and bred, as contrasted with the gentleman.

236–238. See the Appendix, p. 131, for Tennyson's comment on the origin of this figure.

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, "Names:"
He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I began
To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
And double in and out the boles, and race
By all the fountains: fleet I was of foot:
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; behind
I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat
High in the hall: above her droop'd a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair
Damp from the river; and close behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
Huge women blowzed with health, and wind, and rain,

---

239. **tamarisk**, a species of ornamental tree, native in southern Europe and in Asia.

241, ff. Does the movement of the lines correspond to the idea?

245, ff. Another of the many examples in which the medley character of the poem appears, in bringing the beautiful and the ludicrous close together.

250. **Mnemosyne**, goddess of memory, and mother of the Muses. See a classical dictionary.

253, ff. Note the picturesque quality of the scene, and the Princess's apparent unconsciousness of the humor of the situation. In the bantering tone in which the "daughters of the plough" are described, Tennyson's humor is at its best. See also iv, 527–534.

255. **mystic fire**, the electric ball of fire that is sometimes seen on the rigging of a ship at sea; called also St. Elmo's fire.

And labor. Each was like a Druid rock;
Or like a spire of land that stands apart
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
An advent to the throne: and therebeside,
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
The lily-shining child; and on the left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

"It was not thus, O Princess, in old days:
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips:
I led you then to all the Castalies;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
Your second mother: those were gracious times.
Then came your new friend: you began to change—
I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,

---

261. The Druids were the priests of the ancient Britons. Monuments of huge single stones, like those of Stonehenge in southern England, are supposed to have been erected by the ancient Britons, and to have been connected with their worship.

263. **mews.** See the dictionary.

266–268. Cf. Prologue, 81–82.

269–270. Note again the suggestion of a flower in this description of the "lily-like Melissa."

275. **Castalies.** An Anglicized and plural form of Castalia, a fountain on the slope of Mount Parnassus. Both spring and mountain were sacred to the Muses and Apollo, and are familiarly referred to as names for poetry. Here the plural indicates various arts and sciences. Cf. the next line.

277. **this kneeler.** Melissa.

To me you froze: this was my meed for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
And partly that I hoped to win you back,
And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something great,
In which I might your fellow-worker be,
When time should serve; and thus a noble scheme
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
We took this palace; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
What student came but that you planed her path
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean;
Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
Then came these wolves: *they* knew her: *they* endured.
Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
And me none told: not less to an eye like mine
A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
To meet a cold 'We thank you, we shall hear of it
From Lady Psyche:' you had gone to her,
She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us

---

292. For the story of Jonah's gourd, see the Book of *Jonah*, iv, 5–10.
296. **planed**, smoothed.
302. **endured.** Used in what sense?
307–308. **my foot was to you.** An old English idiom.

In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
Were all miscounted as malignant haste
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use required she should be known;
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,
That surely she will speak; if not, then I:
Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
According to the coarseness of their kind,
For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)
And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies;
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
I, that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
And talent, I—you know it—I will not boast:
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
For every gust of chance, and men will say
We did not know the real light, but chased
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

---

314. **touchwood**, known also as punk, or spunk, a fungous growth on trees. Lady Blanche means, of course, to insinuate corrupt and parasitical qualities in her rival. Her "honest heat" is, of course, in reference to the implied comparison of herself to the "grain," that is, to good, sound wood.

315. **were**, subjunctive mood.

325, ff. How does Lady Blanche here betray her insincerity? How does she incense the Princess?

328. **my work.** What does she mean?

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly, "Good:
Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
Our mind is chang'd; we take it to ourself."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
"The plan was mine. I built the nest" she said
"To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and stoop'd to updrag
Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick

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347. **to hatch the cuckoo.** The cuckoo lays its eggs in the nests of other birds, leaving to them the labor of incubation and feeding.

352. For the story of Niobe, who boasted of her many children to the disparagement of Leto, mother of Apollo and Diana, of their anger and their destruction of the children before their mother's eyes, see Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book VI, or a classical dictionary. A famous group of ancient statues, now at Florence, represents the catastrophe of the story.

366. **rights**, avenges.

Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;
For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she crush'd
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
"Read," and I read—two letters—one her sire's.

"Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,
We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
Into his father's hand, who has this night,
You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the darkness invested you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's running thus:
"You have our son: touch not a hair of his head:
Render him up unscathed: give him your hand:
Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear
You hold the woman is the better man;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their Lords
Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve
That we this night should pluck your palace down;
And we will do it, unless you send us back
Our son, on the instant, whole."

392–394. This was the fear that counseled the putting away of Vashti. See *Esther* i, 15–20.

So far I read
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

"O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
But led by golden wishes, and a hope
The child of regal compact, did I break
Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be: hear me, for I bear,
Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell me of you;
I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd to me
From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south
And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
The leader wildswan in among the stars
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm light
The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,
Because I would have reach'd you, had you been
Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the enthroned
Persephonè in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,
A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
Not in this frequence can I lend full tongue,
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
On you, their centre: let me say but this,

---

418. **Cassiopeia**, a constellation, "opposite the Great Bear, on the other side of the pole-star." See note on 194.

419. **Persephone**, daughter of Demeter, the goddess of the fields, was carried off by Pluto, the god of the underworld. It was afterward arranged that she should spend half her time in the upper air with her mother and the other half in Hades.

422. **frequence**, assemblage.

That many a famous man and woman, town
And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
The dwarfs of presage: tho' when known, there grew
Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing; but in you I found
My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
And master'd, while that after-beauty makes
Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
Within me, that except you slay me here,
According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say
The seal does music; who desire you more
Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,
With many thousand matters left to do,
The breath of life; O more than poor men wealth,
Than sick men health—yours, yours, not mine—
but half
Without you; with you, whole; and of those halves
You worthiest; and howe'er you block and bar
Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest till he die;
Yet that I came not all unauthorized
Behold your father's letter."
On one knee
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd
Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,
As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world with foam:
And so she would have spoken, but there rose
A hubbub in the court of half the maids

426, 427. **after . . . presage**, that is, less than they had been imagined to be.

Gather'd together: from the illumined hall
Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press
Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads; they to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land,
And some that men were in the very walls,
And some they cared not; till a clamor grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded: high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and call'd
Across the tumult, and the tumult fell.

"What fear ye? brawlers? am not I your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks: *I* dare
All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye fear?
Peace! there are those to avenge us and they come:
If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,

456, ff. Another of those massed effects of which Tennyson is so fond. What other good examples do you recall?

473. **the crimson-rolling eye**, the revolving light of the lighthouse.

481–485. The suggestion is in the Prologue, lines 32–48.

Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die: yet I blame you not so much for fear;
Six thousand years of fear have made you that
From which I would redeem you: but for those
That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow morn
We hold a great convention: then shall they
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,
Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat the crowd
Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile, that look'd
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

"You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:
And you look well too in your woman's dress:
Well have you done and like a gentleman.
You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—
Then men had said—but now—What hinders me

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500. Does not the Princess forfeit something of her royal poise and dignity in this tirade?

504. **azure gloom.** Have you seen such blue or purple shadows in a valley, below the line of sunlight?

To take such bloody vengeance on you both?—
Yet since our father—Wasps in our good hive,
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—
O would I had his sceptre for one hour!
You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us—
I wed with thee! *I* bound by precontract
Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold
That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:
I trample on your offers and on you:
Begone: we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates."
In wrath she spake.
Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd
Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause,
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
The weight of destiny: so from her face
They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;
The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic night

514–516. Addressed, of course, to the male intruders.

With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.
This went by
As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;
Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
Set into sunrise; then we moved away.

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552. In midsummer in Norway, which is under the Arctic circle, the sun does not dip below the horizon, even at midnight; hence called the "midnight sun."

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
  That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
  And gives the battle to his hands:
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
  He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
  And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-possess'd,
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—
Like one that wishes at a dance to change
The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end:
And he that next inherited the tale,
Half turning to the broken statue, said,
"Sir Ralph has got your colors; if I prove
Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me?"
It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb
Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. "Fight" she said,
"And make us all we would be, great and good."
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
Arranged the favor, and assumed the Prince.

554–561. Lilia's song seizes upon the hint of coming warfare. It expresses at once the fascination which war has for the imagination of women (as well as men), and the depth of the instinct to love the home and children. It was Lilia, you will remember, who would be like the Princess. See the Prologue.

V

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,
We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace" I.
"The second two: they wait," he said, "pass on;
His Highness wakes:" and one, that clash'd in arms,
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
Whispers of war.
Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to hear,
As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
A lisping of the innumerous leaf and dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and then
A strangled titter, out of which there brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and down,
The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,
Panted from weary sides "King, you are free!
We did but keep you surety for our son,
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,
That tends her bristled grunters in the sludge:"
For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,

12–14. Note the effects gained by the liquids and the sibilants in these lines.

More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
And all one rag, disprinced from head to heel.
Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
A whisper'd jest to some one near him, "Look,
He has been among his shadows." "Satan take
The old women and their shadows! (thus the King
Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.
Go: Cyril told us all."
As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice
From what was left of faded woman-slough
To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us.
A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon
Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
Had come on Psyche weeping: "then we fell
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
But will not speak, nor stir."
He show'd a tent
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,
All her fair length upon the ground she lay:
At her head a follower of the camp,

---

28. When it has just begun to bloom.
29. **disprinced.** Meaning?
37. **transient,** passing. The Latinized form of the participle.

A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come" he whisper'd to her,
"Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.
What have you done but right? you could not slay
Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
When fall'n in darker ways." And likewise I:
"Be comforted: have I not lost her too,
In whose least act abides the nameless charm
That none has else for me?" She heard, she moved,
She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth
As those that mourn half-shrouded over death
In deathless marble. "Her," she said, "my friend—
Parted from her—betray'd her cause and mine—
Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?
O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!"
To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child!"
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
The child is hers—for every little fault,
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl
Remembering her mother: O my flower!
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,

66–68. The Prince's consolation may express his feelings; but is it likely to help Psyche's grief?

69. **folded**, muffled. Is the expression pleasing?

And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.
Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all:
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child:
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her:
Ah! what might that man not deserve of me
Who gave me back my child?" "Be comforted,"
Said Cyril, "you shall have it;" but again
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so
Like tender things that being caught feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts
With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at parle: and "Look you" cried
My father "that our compact be fulfill'd:
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man:
She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him:
But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;
She yields, or war."

Then Gama turn'd to me:
"We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl; and yet they say that still

94–96. Perhaps a reminiscence of *Twelfth Night*, Act I, Sc. 5, where Viola tells Olivia how she would woo, were she a lover.

110. **at parle.** In consultation.

You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large:
How say you, war or not?"
"Not war, if possible,
O king," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
The smouldering homestead, and the household flower
Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—
A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
Three times a monster: now she lightens scorn
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot,
By gentleness than war. I want her love.
What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd
Your cities into shards with catapults,
She would not love;—or brought her chain'd, a slave,
The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
Not ever would she love; but brooding turn
The book of scorn, till all my flitting chance
Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire, than this
I would the old God of war himself were dead,
Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,
Not to be molten out."
And roughly spake
My father, "Tut, you know them not, the girls.
Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think

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121. **trampled year**, trampled harvest of the year.

132. **shards**, broken pieces of pottery.

catapults. engines for battering down walls.

134. The Prince seems to mean that he is the slave of the Princess, through his love for her.

That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!
Man is the hunter; woman is his game:
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
They love us for it, and we ride them down.
Wheedling and siding with them! Out! for shame!
Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
As he that does the thing they dare not do,
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in
Among the women, snares them by the score
Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with death
He reddens what he kisses: thus I won
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
Worth winning; but this firebrand—gentleness
To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it."
"Yea but Sire," I cried,
"Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No:
What dares not Ida do that she should prize
The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
The yesternight, and storming in extremes,
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,
No, not the soldier's; yet I hold her, king,
True woman: but you clash them all in one,

146. What legend? Where else has the king expressed his contempt of it? What is there in his nature that explains this contempt?

147–150. Is this a modern idea?

152–158. Compare the conclusion to Part IV.

162. **cherry net**, a net put over cherry-trees to protect the fruit from the birds.

172. **clash them all in one**: confuse them, make no discrimination between different kinds.

That have as many differences as we.
The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need
More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?
They worth it? truer to the law within?
Severer in the logic of a life?
Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of earth and heaven? and she of whom you speak,
My mother, looks as whole as some serene
Creation minted in the golden moods
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the white
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
As dues of Nature. To our point: not war;
Lest I lose all."
"Nay, nay, you spake but sense"
Said Gama. "We remember love ourself
In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.

174–175. State the idea literally. The long speech that follows serves well to reveal the Prince's (and presumably Tennyson's) ideas, but it seems unlikely that the Prince would make such an oration, or his father hear him out.

195. **mooted**, made matter of doubt or of debate.

198–199. See I, 121–122, and note.

You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk;
And there is something in it as you say:
But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—
He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,
Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,
Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—
We would do much to gratify your Prince—
We pardon it; and for your ingress here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,
Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
As ours with Ida: something may be done—
I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.
You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan
Foursquare to opposition."
Here he reach'd
White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring
In every bole, a song on every spray

211-214. Compare Shakespeare's account of Queen Mab in *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Sc. 4, and Milton's references to Mab and the goblin in *L'Allegro*, lines 102-114.

217-218. Why did Arac's word weigh more with her?

219. **ours . . . friends.** Explain the ellipsis.

Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode;
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than Peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
With clamor: for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum
Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;
And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
Such thews of men: the midmost and the highest
Was Arac: all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
War-music, felt the blind wild-beast of force,

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229. **piped their Valentines**, sang their love-songs.

237. **the Prince.** Arac.

246. **such thews of men**, men of such strength.

250. The three stars in the constellation Orion that mark the belt of the figure.

252. Sirius, the brightest of the stars, commonly known as the dog-star. It "alters hue" when low on the horizon.

Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
Stir in me as to strike: then took the king
His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them all:
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

"Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?
But then this question of your troth remains:
And there's a downright honest meaning in her;
She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
She ask'd but space and fair-play for her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me—I myself,
What know I of these things? but, life and soul!
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs:
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of that?
I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong,
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,
I stand upon her side: she made me swear it—
'Sdeath!—and with solemn rites by candle-light—
Swear by St. something—I forget her name—
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;

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282. **'Sdeath**, abbreviated from *God's death*, an oath common in earlier English.

283. Among the legendary stories of the saints is that of the Princess Catharine of Alexandria, who lived in the beginning of the fourth century, and was said to have won over to Christianity the fifty philosophers sent by the Emperor Maxentius to contend with her in public argument. See Baring-Gould's *Lives of the Saints*, XI, 541.

She was a princess too; and so I swore.
Come, this is all; she will not: waive your claim:
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will."

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up
My precontract, and loth by brainless war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat "Like to like!
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow!
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
"Decide it here: why not? we are three to three."

Then spake the third "But three to three? no more?
No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
More, more, for honor: every captain waits
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow
Of these or those, the question settled die."

"Yea," answer'd I, "for this wild wreath of air,
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if ye will.
It needs must be for honor if at all:

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290. **brainless war.** The Prince shows himself a hero more of the modern than of the medieval type.

299. **Cowards to their shame**, that is, afraid of the shame of refusing to fight.

304. **angry** at the capture and detention of King Gama.

Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,
And if we win, we fail: she would not keep
Her compact." "'Sdeath! but we will send to her,"
Said Arac, "worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',
And you shall have her answer by the word."

"Boys!" shriek'd the old king, but vainlier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool; for none
Regarded; neither seem'd there more to say:
Back rode we to my father's camp, and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life: three times he went:
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'd:
He batter'd at the doors; none came: the next,
An awful voice within had warn'd him thence:
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough
Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his hair,
And so belabored him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one glance he caught
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately Pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and left
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills roll

---

319. Readers without bucolic experience may need to know that this means a hen that has been given duck's eggs to hatch, and is frightened on seeing the young ducks take to water.

324. **wells**, springs or brooks.

325. **life**, for life-blood.

336–340. Note the impressiveness of the figure.

The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd
His iron palms together with a cry;
Himself would tilt it out among the lads:
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur:
And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And sware to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field
Flat to the garden-wall; and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd: so here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rolling words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

"O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation when we heard

355–356. **Tomyris**, queen of the Massagetæ, resisting the invasion of her territory (B. C. 529) by Cyrus the Great, defeated him. Finding his body among the slain, she immersed his head in blood, in fulfilment of her threat to give him his fill of blood. The decorations of the College grounds are still in harmony with the action of the poem.

358. **lists**, the barriers that enclose the field of combat at a tournament; used also for the field itself. See Scott's *Ivanhoe*, chapters VII–IX, for an account of a tournament.

Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge;
Of living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead despots; and of those,—
Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion: and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men: the old leaven leaven'd all;
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
No woman named: therefore I set my face
Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them:
I stored it full of rich memorial:
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,
And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—for their sport!—
I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these?
Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd

---

366. In reference to the Chinese custom referred to in Lady Psyche's lecture, II, 118.

367–368. A custom among the Russian peasantry.

369–370. The Hindu custom of burning the widow upon the husband's funeral pyre, now abolished by English rule.

371–372. Hindu mothers, who threw their female infants into the Ganges lest they should incur the dishonor of not being married.

372–373. The vulture swoops with head and talon, etc.

384. rout, a crowd.

In honor—what, I would not aught of false—
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
What end soever: fail you will not. Still
Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;
His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,
Fight and fight well; strike and strike home. O dear
Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,
Your very armor hallow'd, and your statues
Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd aside,
We plant a solid foot into the Time,
And mould a generation strong to move
With claim on claim from right to right, till she
Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself;
And Knowledge in our own land make her free,
And, ever following those two crowned twins,
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain
Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs
Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest.
"See that there be no traitors in your camp:
We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust
Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague of men!
Almost our maids were better at their homes,
Than thus man-girdled here: indeed I think

394–395. It is evident from the descriptions of King Gama and his children that it was not from him they got their force.

404. **gad-fly**, the vexation of the present situation.

412. **orbs**, encircles.

416. **arms**, Lady Blanche and Lady Psyche.

417. In reference to the plagues sent upon the Egyptians while they held the Israelites in bondage. See *Exodus*, chapters viii–x.

Our chiefest comfort is the little child
Of one unworthy mother; which she left:
She shall not have it back: the child shall grow
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed
This morning: there the tender orphan hands
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world: farewell."

I ceased; he said, "Stubborn, but she may sit
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms,
And breed up warriors! See now, tho' yourself
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
That swallow common sense, the spindling king,
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,
And topples down the scales; but this is fixt
As are the roots of earth and base of all;
Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle she:
Man with the head and woman with the heart:
Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion. Look you! the gray mare
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of Hell
Mix with his hearth: but you—she's yet a colt—
Take, break her: strongly groom'd and straitly curb'd
She might not rank with those detestable

420–427. In this passage is contained the motive which runs through most of the lyrical interludes, and which is to determine the conclusion of the story.

434–440. This is, of course, precisely the view that the Princess Ida is antagonizing.

447–449. In allusion to the more vehement type of "woman's-rights" orators.

That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.
They say she's comely; there's the fairer chance:
I like her none the less for rating at her!
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
The bearing and the training of a child
Is woman's wisdom."
Thus the hard old king:
I took my leave, for it was nearly noon:
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause "take not his life:"
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt win:"
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,
And how the strange betrothment was to end:
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse
That one should fight with shadows and should fall;
And like a flash the weird affection came:
King, camp and college turn'd to hollow shows;
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a dream:
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more

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456. In what sense is the old king *hard*?

470. "Shadow of a dream." This expression, from *Hamlet*, II, 2, 265, has become a household phrase.

472, ff. Read carefully the account of the tourney. Is it vivid? Do the lines suggest by their form and movement the clashing of armed forces? Is the picture of Ida watching the struggle effective?

The trumpet, and again: at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I dream'd
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but kept their seats:
Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew:
Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft, and shield—
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
With hammers; till I thought, can this be he
From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,
The mother makes us most—and in my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
And highest, among the statues, statuelike,
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she
No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—

---

500. **Miriam**, who led the women of Israel in a triumphant dance over the destruction of their pursuers, the Egyptians. See *Exodus* xiv, 15–xv, 22.

Jael, who slew her people's enemy, Sisera, by driving a nail into his temples as he slept. See *Judges* iv, 17–22. Not an inapt symbol of the barbaric test to which the Princess and her schemes are brought.

Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,
Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drave
Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my dream
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,
His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for everything
Gave way before him: only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own right eye,
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:
And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me; and I fell.

---

510. **wake**, an all-night vigil given up to merry-making.

VI

Home they brought her warrior dead:
  She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
  "She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
  Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
  Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
  Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
  Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
  Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
  "Sweet my child, I live for thee."

Few poems in the English language tell so much in so few words, or so touch the springs of deep feeling. The motive of *The Princess*—the love of children—is here presented from yet another point of view.

My dream had never died or lived again.
As in some mystic middle state I lay;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears: they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand:

---

8. Why is it necessary for the proper conclusion of the story that the Prince's side should be vanquished?

16. See *Judges*, chapter v. Note the wild and fierce beauty of this barbaric song of triumph. Compare the original with Tennyson's transcript. See I, 137–142, II, 453–455, and especially IV, 119–122, for references to the songs that the Princess made.

17–21. In allusion, probably, to the parable of the mustard-seed. See *Matthew* xiii, 31–32.

They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came,
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

"Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

"And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three: but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these

---

41. **fangs**, roots.

47. **Blanch'd in our annals.** Meaning?

perpetual feast. What is the grammatical construction?

The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led
A hundred maids in train across the Park.
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on they came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest: by them went
The enamor'd air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of light
Slided, they moving under shade: but Blanche
At distance follow'd: so they came: anon
Thro' open field into the lists they wound
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay; there stay'd;
Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—and prest
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal names,
And said "You shall not lie in the tents, but here,
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served
With female hands and hospitality."

59–66. Compare the softness of this scene with the fierceness of Ida's song, and observe how it indicates a transition in the theme and tenor of the poem.

62. her. Is this an irregularity in grammar?

65. See Appendix, p. 133.

70. **stately fretwork**, antlers.

73. Note the alliterations.

78. **but here.** The battle was fought by the walls of the palace.

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,
She past my way. Up started from my side
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd; and when she saw
The haggard father's face and reverend beard
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:
"He saved my life: my brother slew him for it."
No more: at which the king in bitter scorn
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,
And held them up: she saw them, and a day
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good Queen, her mother, shore the tress
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:
And then once more she look'd at my pale face:
Till understanding all the foolish work
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her mind;
Her noble heart was molten in her breast;
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth; she laid
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
"O Sire," she said, "he lives: he is not dead:
O let me have him with my brethren here
In our own palace: we will tend on him
Like one of these; if so, by any means,

---

81. What other hints are there that she had a secret interest in the Prince?

83. **whelpless eye.** Meaning?

94. Cf. I, 37–39 and 91–95.

96, 97. What other references are there to Ida's mother?

100, 101. Why **foolish**? Does Ida yet fully realize the folly of her plans?

To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make
Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said: but at the happy word "he lives"
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.
So those two foes above my fall'n life,
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother and began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
Brook'd not, but clamoring out "Mine—mine—not yours,
It is not yours, but mine: give me the child"
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,
And turn'd each face her way: wan was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
The laces toward her babe; but she nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood
Erect and silent, striking with her glance
The mother, me, the child; but he that lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,

---

110. What "load of thanks"?
115, 116. **night . . . gray**. State in literal terms.
119. Cf. the Prologue, 82–3.

Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it seem'd
Or self-involved; but when she learnt his face,
Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said:

"O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
That with your long locks play the Lion's mane!
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.
What would you more? give her the child! remain
Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:
Win you the hearts of women; and beware
Lest, where you seek the common love of these,
The common hate with the revolving wheel
Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis
Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire,
And tread you out for ever: but howsoe'er
Fixt in yourself, never in your own arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep

---

139. Note how well the slow movement of the line suggests the motion of the wounded man.

142. **self-involved.** Meaning?

learnt, recognized.

148. Does Cyril here imply more than he says?

149, 150. In what way is this sentence an expression of the meaning of the whole poem?

154. **all as dead.** What did Cyril mean? Compare the colloquial phrase, "as good as dead."

155–160. Cf. 149–150, and II, 438–442.

158. **Nemesis.** See the dictionary.

One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,
Or own one port of sense not flint to prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,
Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,
Give *me* it; *I* will give it her."
He said:
At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd
Dry flame, she listening; after sank and sank
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it: "Pretty bud!
Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of the woods!
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
Of traitorous friend and broken system made
No purple in the distance, mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell;
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part: and yet how fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
In the dead prime: but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to me!
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom"—here she kiss'd it: then—
"All good go with thee! take it, Sir," and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;

181, 182. Is Ida aware of the inconsistency of this statement?

188. **bear the yoke.** As there are cant phrases even in sacred causes, so the Princess has hers. Can you name others that were current in her college?

Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it; after that
Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

"We two were friends: I go to mine own land
For ever: find some other: as for me
I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
Then Arac. "Ida—'sdeath! you blame the man;
You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
I am your warrior; I and mine have fought
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she weeps:
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

"I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?
Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
She said you had a heart—I heard her say it—
'Our Ida has a heart'—just ere she died—
'But see that some one with authority
Be near her still' and I—I sought for one—
All people said she had authority—

204-209. Arac's feelings ring true and manly, here as always, though he would cut a sorry figure in his sister's intellectual pursuits.

220-222. The character of Gama is drawn with entire consistency. He is never proof against the temptation to garrulous reminiscence. Where else in his speech does he show the same weakness?

The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one word;
No! tho' your father sues: see how you stand
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maim'd,
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
For your wild whim: and was it then for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,
When first she came, all flush'd you said to me,
Now had you got a friend of your own age,
Now could you share your thought; now should men see
Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd with, she
You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroïd and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and now
A word, but one, one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?
You will not? well—no heart have you, or such
As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness."
So said the small king moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force
By many a varying influence and so long.

---

224. **Lot's wife**, who was turned into a pillar of salt. See *Genesis* xix, 26.

245. That is, her mother's judgment that she "had a heart."

246. **fancies**, whims, wild ideas.

Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept:
Her head a little bent; and on her mouth
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
In a still water: then brake out my sire,
Lifting his grim head from my wounds. "O you,
Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,
Because he might have wish'd it—but we see
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
And think that you might mix his draught with death,
When your skies change again: the rougher hand
Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to attend
A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her broke
A genial warmth and light once more, and shone
Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.
"Come hither,
O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace me, come,
Quick while I melt; make reconcilement sure
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour:
Come to the hollow heart they slander so!
Kiss and be friends, like children being chid!
I seem no more: I want forgiveness too:
I should have had to do with none but maids,
That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,
Dear traitor, too much loved, why?—why?—Yet see,
Before these kings we embrace you yet once more
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust, not love, you less.
And now, O sire,

253, 254. Is the simile accurate or expressive?

272. **no more** (than a chidden child).

278–291. Ida breaks down at last under the stern reproach of the old king. What were his ideas of how women should be treated? Was he partly right in Ida's case?

Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,
Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;
Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall have
Free adit; we will scatter all our maids
Till happier times each to her proper hearth:
What use to keep them here—now? grant my prayer.
Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down
From my fixt height to mob me up with all
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
Poor weakling ev'n as they are."

Passionate tears
Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril said:
"Your brother, Lády,—Florian,—ask for him
Of your great head—for he is wounded too—
That you may tend upon him with the prince."
"Ay so," said Ida with a bitter smile,
"Our laws are broken: let him enter too."
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. "Ay so," she said,
"I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:
We break our laws with ease, but let it be."
"Ay, so?" said Blanche: "Amazed am I to hear
Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with ease
The law your Highness did not make: 'twas I.
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
And block'd them out; but these men came to woo
Your Highness—verily I think to win."

---

298. See IV, 21, ff.

304. What is the effect of Lady Blanche's speech upon the Princess? Does this indicate any radical change in her views of things?

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye:
But Ida, with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

"Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all,
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will! Let our girls flit,
Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.
We brook no further insult but are gone."

She turn'd; the very nape of her white neck
Was rosed with indignation: but the Prince
Her brother came; the king her father charm'd
Her wounded soul with words: nor did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare
Straight to the doors: to them the doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels:
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there
Rested: but great the crush was, and each base,
To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers: at the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats

---

319. **Pharos**, a lighthouse; originally the lighthouse that stood on the island of Pharos at the entrance to Alexandria.

330. Why does the poet choose the words **groaning** and **shriek'd**?

335, 336. What is the effect of the sibilants?

Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
Bow-back'd with fear: but in the centre stood
The common men with rolling eyes; amazed
They glared upon the women, and aghast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armor clash'd or jingled, while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and steel
That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,
And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance:
And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'
The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness; left me in it;
And others otherwhere they laid; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times; but some were left of those
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,
Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.

347, 348. Why the **angry Pallas** and the **wrathful Dian** at this juncture of the story?

VII

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
  The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
  With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
                    Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
  I love not hollow cheek nor faded eye:
  Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
                    Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
  I strove against the stream and all in vain:
  Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
                    Ask me no more.

The beauty of this song lies in part in the suggestiveness of the comparison made. Love, which the Princess had scorned, is, like the great forces of nature, irresistible. Compare this song of maidenly yielding with the different yet equally beautiful speech of Portia after the choice of the caskets. See *Merchant of Venice*, Act III, Sc. 2.

That after that dark night among the fields
She needs must wed him for her own good name;
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored;
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd
To incense the Head once more; till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she hung
A moment, and she heard, at which her face
A little flush'd, and she past on; but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own now reconciled; nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat:
Then came a change; for sometimes I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
"You are not Ida;" clasp it once again,
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold, which seem'd a truth:
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,
And often she believed that I should die:
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,

---

69. **Sacred, to what?**

70–75. The Princess is made to feel the force of love by the examples everywhere, by its claims urged by her friends, and finally by her own heart. See lines 91–103.

And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd
On flying Time from all their silver tongues—
And out of memories of her kindlier days,
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death
For weakness: it was evening: silent light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought
Two grand designs; for on one side arose
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cramm'd
The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest

---

88. **the dead.** Compare the common phrase, "the dead of night."

100-103. These lines are justly celebrated for their beauty.

106. **slept.** What is the suggestion?

109. **Oppian law.** "This was a sumptuary law passed during the time of the direst distress of Rome, when Hannibal was almost at the gates [B. C. 215]. It enacted that no woman should wear a gay-colored dress, or have more than half an ounce of gold ornaments, and that none should approach within a mile of any city or town in a car drawn by horses [unless on account of public sacrifices]. The war being concluded, and the emergency over, the women demanded the repeal of the law. They gained one consul, but Cato, the other one, resisted. The women rose, thronged the streets and forum, and harassed the magistrates until the law was repealed [B. C. 195]" (Dawson). See Livy, Book XXXIV.

A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,
A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,
The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused
Hortensia pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
They did but look like hollow shows; nor more
Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
And rounder seem'd: I moved; I sigh'd: a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand:
Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly:

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112. **Hortensia.** Smith's *Classical Dictionary* gives two Hortensias, sister and daughter of the orator Hortensius. The latter "partook of her father's eloquence, and spoke before the triumvirs on behalf of the wealthy matrons, when these were threatened with a special tax to defray the expenses of the war against Brutus and Cassius" [B. C. 43]. The discrepancy of 180 years in the chronology is, of course, no impeachment of the purely artistic value of the representation.

One grows a little weary of these emblems of female superiority. Tennyson is perhaps again indulging in banter. Hortensia's cause might be more dignified.

113. **axe** and **eagle**, the emblems of civil and military authority in Rome.

115. **wolf's-milk.** In allusion to the story that Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were nursed by a wolf.

120–122. Compare this with the descriptions of the unloving and unlovable Lady Blanche, and with the former descriptions of the Princess. What is the difference?

"If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die."

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd; she paused;
She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a cry;
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death;
And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame; and all
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love;
And down the streaming crystal dropt; and she
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
For worship without end; nor end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided forth,
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy sleep.

130–134. Possibly an echo of lines 55–62, Part VI, of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

146. **falser self.** What is meant?

148. **that other.** Aphrodite, goddess of love, was born of the foam of the sea. See the Homeric hymn to Aphrodite for the story as here remembered.

149. **barren deeps.** The epithet is borrowed from Homer.

Deep in the night I woke; she, near me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land:
There to herself, all in low tones, she read:

"Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

"Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

"Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

"Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

"Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me."

I heard her turn the page; she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read:

"Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,

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167. **all Danaë to the stars.** Open to the stars, as Danaë to Jupiter when he descended to her as her lover in a shower of golden light. See a classical dictionary for the story.

177, ff. "Possibly, so far as objective beauty and finish are concerned, the nonpareil of the whole poem. It is an imitation of the apostrophe of Polyphemus to Galatea, and never were the antique and modern feeling more finely contrasted: the one, clear, simple, childlike, perfect (in the Greek) as regards melody and tone; the other, nobler, more intellectual, the antique body with the modern soul. The substitution of the mountains for the sea, as the haunt of the beloved nymph, is the

To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,

Laureate's only departure from the *material* employed by Theocritus." Stedman, *Victorian Poets*, p. 228.

Note the echoing of certain words like a refrain, as "Come," and in 203, 204, "sweet." Note, too, the way in which, in this and the preceding song, the beauties of nature are crowded into the lines, partly for the sake of their beauty, and partly for their associations with human experiences.

188. **foxlike in the vine.** Compare the *Song of Solomon*, ii, 15: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines." Dawson cites also from Theocritus, Idyl I, "Two foxes, one is roaming up and down the rows, spoiling the ripe grapes."

189. **silver horns.** The snow-capped mountain peaks.

191–193. **firths of ice**, etc. Glaciers.

201. **azure pillars.** Columns of smoke.

205–207. The beauty of these lines has called forth many encomiums. "Who, after three such lines, will talk of English as a harsh and

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay
Listening; then look'd. Pale was the perfect face;
The bosom with long sighs labor'd; and meek
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,
And the voice trembled and the hand. She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
That all her labor was but as a block
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to one
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power
In knowledge: something wild within her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
And she had nursed me there from week to week:
Much had she learnt in little time. In part

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clumsy language, and seek in the effeminate and monotonous Italian for expressive melody of sound? Who cannot *hear* in them the rapid rippling of the water, the stately calmness of the wood-dove's note, and, in the repetition of short syllables and soft liquids in the last line, the

'Murmuring of innumerable bees?'"

Charles Kingsley.

"In these last lines there is an overpowering imaginative charm, something almost magical in its bewitchment, which makes us think of the words of Keats, that to him a fine phrase was an intoxicating delight. It is a melody, the finest and most magical melody of which words are capable." Dawson, *Makers of Modern English*, p. 174.

213, 214. What instances can you recall of her failure "in sweet humility"?

216. **were.** Would be. Note the repetition.

222, 223. The Princess has learned something more of the great laws of nature than was included even in Lady Psyche's encyclopædic lecture.

It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl—
"Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce!
When comes another such? never, I think,
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs."
Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;
Till notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,
That early woke to feed her little ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

"Blame not thyself too much," I said, "nor blame
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;
These were the rough ways of the world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:
For she that out of Lethe scales with man
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
How shall men grow? but work no more alone!
Our place is much: as far as in us lies

227. **to vex true hearts.** Recall her father's words.

230. **Signs.** The signs of the zodiac.

234–237. In a poem filled on every hand with studied beauty, few passages surpass this, in its fitness to the theme, in its appeal to the emotions, and its simplicity.

245. **Lethe,** the river of the dead, the touch of whose waters erased all memories. Here used for the unknown past before birth.

248. Retards the devplopment of the world, or of her generation.

251. **Our place is much.** Our (or my?) rank will avail much.

We two will serve them both in aiding her—
Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up but drag her down—
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
Within her—let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undevelopt man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world:
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words:
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other ev'n as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be!"
Sighing she spoke "I fear
They will not."
"Dear, but let us type them now

259–280. This oft-quoted passage is probably to be taken as Tennyson's answer to the "woman question."

261. **his.** Love's.

In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
Life."
And again sighing she spoke: "A dream
That once was mine! what woman taught you this?"

"Alone," I said, "from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime:
Yet there was one thro' whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he

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291. As Ida's knowledge of her own sex was imperfect, how could she know men? To her mind, the two kings of the poem were probably the only types. Of the poet-like nature of the Prince, just, sensitive, and sympathetic with her own nobler ideals, she had known nothing. See Introduction, pp. xix, xx.

307-308. Allusions to "the music of the spheres" are frequent in literature. One of the best known is in *The Merchant of Venice*, V, 1. See

With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

"But I,"
Said Ida, tremulously, "so all unlike—
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words:
This mother is your model. I have heard
Of your strange doubts: they well might be: I seem
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince;
You cannot love me."

"Nay but thee" I said
"From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods
That mask'd thee from men's reverence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood: now,
Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,
Indeed I love: the new day comes, the light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,
This truthful change in thee has kill'd it. Dear,
Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world;
Approach and fear not; breathe upon my brows;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,
I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,

a classical dictionary, under Pythagoras, for an explanation of the phrase.

313. **so all unlike** the ideal you have given.

My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee: come,
Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."

CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
The random scheme as wildly as it rose:
The words are mostly mine; for when we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
"I wish she had not yielded!" then to me,
"What, if you drest it up poetically!"
So pray'd the men, the women: I gave assent:
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven
Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?
The men required that I should give throughout
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we banter'd little Lilia first:
The women—and perhaps they felt their power,
For something in the ballads which they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess—why
Not make her true-heroic—true-sublime?
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

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5. Can you account for his wish?

22. **such a framework**, the medley materials of the poem.

26. In a diagonal as impelled by forces acting in different directions.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute: the sequel of the tale
Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,
She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
"You—tell us what we are;" who might have told,
For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,
But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climb'd
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw
The happy valleys, half in light, and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace;
Gray halls alone among their massive groves;
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat;
The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas;
A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

"Look there, a garden!" said my college friend,
The Tory member's elder son, "and there!
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,

49–71. This digression, called forth by the Revolution of 1848 in France, was not in the first edition of the poem (1847). Its right to be here may well be questioned. It has nothing to do with the theme or the setting of the tale. Moreover it is one of several indications that even the cultured Tennyson had his British prejudices against his neighbors on the other side of the Channel. He wrote once to his friend Fitzgerald, "I am struck on returning from France with the look of good sense in the London people."

Some patient force to change them when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd—
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
In mock heroics stranger than our own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;
Too comic for the solemn things they are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas!
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "ourselves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides."

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,

75–79. These ideas are characteristic both of Tennyson and his century.

82. **holly-oaks**, hollyhocks.

A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
That stood the nearest—now address'd to speech—
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow: a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charm'd: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man: the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.

APPENDIX

TENNYSON'S LETTER ON THE PRINCESS[1]

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
SURREY, *Nov. 21, 1882.*

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your able and thoughtful essay on *The Princess.* You have seen, amongst other things, that if women ever were to play such freaks, the burlesque and the tragic might go hand in hand.

I may tell you that the songs were not an afterthought. Before the first edition came out I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs in between the separate divisions of the poem; again, I thought, the poem will explain itself; but the public did not see that the child, as you say, was the heroine of the piece, and at last I conquered my laziness and inserted them. You would be still more certain that the child was the true heroine if, instead of the first song as it now stands,

As thro' the land at eve we went,

I had printed the first song which I wrote, "The losing of the child." The child is sitting on the bank of a river, and playing with flowers; a flood comes down; a dam has been broken through; the child is borne down by the flood; the whole village distracted; after a time the flood has subsided; the child is thrown safe and sound again upon the bank, and all the women are in

[1] Written to Mr. S. E. Dawson after reading his excellent *Study of the Princess.*

raptures. I quite forget the words of the ballad, but I think I may have it somewhere.

Your explanatory notes are very much to the purpose, and I do not object to your finding parallelisms. They must always recur. A man (a Chinese scholar) some time ago wrote to me, saying that in an unknown, untranslated Chinese poem there were two whole lines of mine, almost word for word. Why not? Are not human eyes all over the world looking at the same objects, and must there not consequently be coincidences of thought and impressions and expressions? It is scarcely possible for any one to say or write anything in this late time of the world to which, in the rest of the literature of the world, a parallel could not somewhere be found. But when you say that this passage or that was suggested by Wordsworth or Shelley or another, I demur, and more, I wholly disagree. There was a period in my life when, as an artist—Turner, for instance—takes rough sketches of landskip, etc., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature. I never put these down, and many and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain, *e. g.*:

A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight.[1]

Suggestion: The sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely sea-village in England, tho' now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapor, and the moon was behind it.

A great black cloud
Drag inward from the deep.[2]

Suggestion: A coming storm seen from the top of Snowdon.

[1] *Princess*, I, 244. [2] *Princess*, VII, 21,22.

In the *Idylls of the King*:

with all
Its stormy crests that smote against the skies.[1]

Suggestion: A storm which came upon us in the middle of the North Sea.

As the water-lily starts and slides.[2]

Suggestion: Water-lilies in my own pond, seen on a gusty day with my own eyes. They did start and slide in the sudden puffs of wind, till caught and stayed by the tether of their own stalks—quite as *true* as Wordsworth's simile, and more in detail.

A wild wind shook—
Follow, follow, thou shalt win.

Suggestion: I was walking in the New Forest. A wind did arise, and

Shake the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together.[3]

The wind, I believe, was a west wind, but, because I wished the Prince to go south, I turned the wind to the south, and naturally the wind said, "Follow." I believe the resemblance which you note is just a chance one. Shelley's lines are not familiar to me, tho', of course, if they occur in the *Prometheus*, I must have read them.

I could multiply instances, but I will not bore you; and far indeed am I from asserting that books, as well as nature, are not, and ought not to be, suggestive to the poet. I am sure that I myself, and many others, find a peculiar charm in those passages of such great masters as Virgil or Milton where they adopt the creation of a bygone poet, and reclothe it, more or less, according to their own fancy. But there is, I fear, a pro-

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[1] *Lancelot and Elaine*, 483. [2] *Princess*, IV, 236. [3] *Princess*, I, 96–99.

saic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, bookworms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who *impute themselves* to the poet, and so believe that *he*, too, has no imagination, but is for ever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate. They will not allow one to say "Ring the bells," without finding that we have taken it from Sir P. Sydney—or even to use such a simple expression as the ocean "roars" without finding out the precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarized it (fact!).

I have known an old fish-wife, who had lost two sons at sea, clench her fist at the advancing tide on a stormy day and cry out: "Ay! roar, do! how I hates to see thee show thy white teeth!" Now if I had adopted her exclamation and put it into the mouth of some old woman in one of my poems, I dare say the critics would have thought it original enough, but would most likely have advised me to go to Nature for my old women, and not to my own imagination; and indeed it is a strong figure.

Here is another little anecdote about suggestion. When I was about twenty or twenty-one I went on a tour to the Pyrenees. Lying among these mountains before a waterfall that comes down one thousand or twelve hundred feet, I sketched it (according to my custom then) in these words:

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn.[1]

When I printed this a critic informed me that "lawn" was the material used in theatres to imitate a waterfall, and graciously added: "Mr. T. should not go to the boards of a theatre, but to Nature herself, for his suggestions." And I *had* gone to Nature herself. I think it is a moot point whether, if I had known how that

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[1] *The Lotos-Eaters*, 11.

effect was produced on the stage, I should have ventured to publish the line.

I find that I have written, quite contrary to my custom, a letter, when I had merely intended to thank you for your interesting commentary.

Thanking you again for it, I beg you to believe me

Very faithfully yours,

A. TENNYSON.

P. S.—By the bye, you are wrong about "the tremulous isles of light";[1] they are "isles of light," spots of sunshine coming through the leaves, and seeming to slide from one to the other, as the procession of girls "moves under *shade*." And surely the "beard-blown" goat[2] involves a sense of the wind blowing the beard on the height of the ruined pillar.

[1] *Princess*, VI, 65. [2] *Princess*, IV, 60.

THE END